Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-010 *16 January 1996*

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Yemeni-Eritrean Conflict

Eritrean Interior Minister Comments on Conflict

LD0901221696 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1916 GMT 9 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait, 9 Jan — Eritrean Interior Minister Said Abdalla Ali said today that the existing conflict with Yemen over Hanish Island should be solved through international arbitration.

The Eritrean minister added in a news conference held at the Kuwaiti journalist association that before starting the international solution, the Hanish Islands should be simultaneously evacuated until the international verdict is issued in this respect.

He pointed out that the solution, which would be issued by the International Court of Justice, would be binding to Eritrea and Yemen.

He said: "We have felt from his highness, the amir, and from the brotherly Kuwaiti officials a positive understanding of the conflict and sincere support for the good efforts currently exerted to contain the conflict and solve it peacefully."

He said the number of those killed as a result of the armed clash reached 12 from the Eritrean side, and 20 from the Yemeni side, adding that "we did not want that, except that it was required by the legitimate defense and repulsing aggression." [passage omitted]

The minister pointed out that his current tour included numerous Gulf and North African countries for conveying messages from the Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki to explain the recent developments of the Eritrean-Yemeni dispute, and the only solution to it.

The Eritrean minister expressed his conviction that there were two reasons that drove Yemen into the conflict with Eritrea. The first reason is Eritrea's contract with an American company that specialized in prospecting for oil in those islands, and the second reason is the critical internal condition the Yemeni Government is suffering from.

The Eritrean minister recalled the solutions that preceded the armed conflict with Yemen where Eritrea had put forward the idea of resorting to international arbitration, but the Yemeni Government refused the idea and claimed ownership of the islands. In the end, however, the Yemenis agreed to discuss the issue of "Greater Hanish" island only, excluding the other islands, a matter which the Eritrean Government refused.

Yemen's President Salih Views Dispute

JN0901183096 London AL-WASAT in Arabic 8-14 Jan 96 pp 10-12

[Interview with Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih by 'Abd-al-Nabi Yusuf Shahin in Sanaa; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Shahin] What impact did the Eritrean occupation of al-Hanish island leave on the ordinary Yemeni citizen?

[Salih] The Yemeni people are very angry and upset at the Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir. They never expected their Eritrean neighbors to launch such an aggression, in view of the historical and good neighborly relations binding the Yemeni and Eritrean peoples. These relations can be described as constantly having been distinguished and strategic, not to mention the Yemeni people's role in championing the Eritrean revolution and achieving the independence of the Eritrean State. In any case, this role was a duty. The Yemeni people used to view Eritrea as a neighborly and friendly state and sought to promote relations with it in all fields. Unfortunately, the Eritrean aggression on the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir in this regrettable manner dealt a painful blow to our Yemeni people who did not expect this from their neighbors in Eritrea. At any rate, you are in Yemen and you can see the Yemeni reaction for yourself.

[Shahin] How do you respond to people in Yemen saying that what is taken by force can only be regained by force and that Yemeni sovereignty should be respected?

[Salih] Frankly, there is a great deal of popular pressure on the Yemeni leadership to regain al-Hanish al-Kabir as soon as possible. Everyone feels the deep wound that our brothers in Eritrea have caused and this is something we did not want to happen. However, we in the Yemeni republic will continue to deal with matters with responsibility and will handle them as statesmen do. We will not be lured by any attempt to preoccupy us with battles which we can do without. However, we will continue to adhere to all our legitimate rights in line with international laws and charters. We will always be ready to give the peaceful option, mediation efforts, and good offices enough chance to spare the Red Sea area any tension that may jeopardize security and stability in this vital part of the world. We in Yemen support peace and not war that only sows destruction and hampers development efforts.

[Shahin] Did UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali make any proposals or initiatives to resolve the dispute with Eritrea?

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The message also deals with the French Government's readiness to play the role of mediator to resolve differences between our country and Eritrea, as a result of the Eritrean aggression on the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir, in a way that will enhance security, stability, and the safety of international navigation in the Red Sea.

The brother president welcomed the French initiative on mediation. He stressed our country's interest in resolving differences with Eritrea by peaceful means according to the bases of international law.

The message was conveyed by His Excellency the French Ambassador to Yemen (Marcello Jale) during his meeting with the brother president today.

Egypt's Musa Delivers Mubarak Message to Salih

JN0601214196 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 6 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The President, brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, today received 'Amr Musa, foreign minister of the sisterly Arab Republic of Egypt, who conveyed to the president a message from his brother President Husni Mubarak. The letter discusses Egyptian efforts and other mediation efforts to solve differences between our country and Eritrea which resulted from the Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir. The letter also discusses ways of strengthening peace, security, and stability in the Red Sea and promoting the interests of the peoples of the region.

During the meeting they also discussed several issues of interest to the two sisterly countries and ways of strengthening bilateral relations.

The brother president renewed his welcome and appreciation for efforts exerted by the brothers in Egypt to find a peaceful solution to the dispute between our country and Eritrea on the sea borders. He stressed our country's readiness to pave all possible ways to render these efforts successful and to help promote all the good offices exerted by the brothers and friends to find a just and peaceful settlement to the differences with Eritrea over the sea borders and on the basis of [words indistinct], serving relations of good neighborliness with Eritrea and ensuring peace, security, and safety of international navigation in the Red Sea.

The president asked the Egyptian foreign minister to convey his greetings to his brother Muhammad Husni Mubarak, wishing him good health and the fraternal Egyptian people further progress and prosperity.

The meeting was attended by brother 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, deputy prime minister and foreign minister; Salim Mutahhar [name indistinct], head of the central organ of [words indistinct]. On the Egyptian side, it was attended by Major General 'Umar Sulayman, minister of presidential affairs' [name and title as heard]; Badr Hammam, the assistant foreign minister; and [name indistinct], the Egyptian ambassador in Sanaa.

'Amr Musa left Sanaa this afternoon. In a predeparture statement, he praised the results of his visit to our country and described them as good. He described his meeting with the president as useful and important.

The minister stated that the Egyptian stand on the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute is the same as that of the [words indistinct] peaceful solution to this issue through dialogue and [word indistinct].

Musa added that there are so many concepts and [words indistinct]. He said that the Yemeni stand and the Yemeni Government [words indistinct] the situation requires peaceful [word indistinct] and negotiations, and dialogue, and establishing security on [words indistinct].

Answering reporters questions, the minister said that peaceful dialogue is the way to solve this problem in accordance with international law and the principles of [word indistinct].

Comments on Mediation Efforts

JN0601155896 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0740 GMT 6 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Muscat, 6 Jan (WAKH) — Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said Egyptian offices between Yemen and Eritrea seek to reach a fair settlement that spares the two countries the use of force and to avoid any confrontation in which other parties may take part.

In a statement to the Omani newspaper AL-WATAN published today, Musa said Egyptian mediation follows the talks held by UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali in Sanaa and Asmara and his meeting with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak.

Musa, who is scheduled to leave today for Asmara and Sanaa, added that the Yemeni and Eritrean sides seem to have accepted a proposal to hold a dialogue on various levels without having recourse to international parties. He said what is currently proposed is a regional solution, and not an international initiative.

Musa said the United Nations will not propose an initiative now to give Arab, regional, and particularly African, efforts a chance. Musa pointed out that his country takes into consideration the interests of all sides to ensure navigation in the Red Sea and to guarantee the rights of Yemen and Eritrea. He added that President Mubarak put forth a number of proposals on which he

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will brief the Yemeni and Eritrean presidents within hours.

The Omani newspaper AL-WATAN reported that Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa will be accompanied by Major General 'Umar Sulayman, chief of General Intelligence, who delivered messages from President Mubarak to the Yemeni and Eritrean presidents a few days ago.

Says Contact With Egypt To Continue

NC0701075896 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2140 GMT 6 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 6 Jan (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa returned to Cairo from Asmara this evening at the end of a brief visit to Yemen and Eritrea as part of Egypt's efforts to contain the crisis between the two countries over Hanish al-Kabir island.

He delivered messages from President Husni Mubarak to Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki.

On his arrival in Cairo, the foreign minister said he would present a detailed report to President Husni Mubarak on his meetings with the two presidents and his talks with the foreign ministers of the two countries.

He said the two sides are trying to settle the problem and reach a peaceful solution. Some points still need to be followed up on, and other countries are still mediating, he said.

He said the two sides are very interested in Egypt's attempts to bring their views closer, supplementing the Ethiopian initiative.

He added: There are moves to promote international arbitration and to stop all military operations. The current discussions concern withdrawal from the disputed region according the principles of the international law and the willingness to negotiate.

He went on: Egypt will continue its contacts with all the concerned countries, including Ethiopia. France is also making some efforts, so we will hold contacts with it. We will continue our contacts with Yemen and Eritrea.

Yemeni Envoy to Egypt Asserts Right to Islands

NC0901092396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0605 GMT 9 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Jan (MENA)—Yemen's Ambassador to Egypt Ahmad Luqman has praised Egypt's efforts to mediate the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute.

In an interview with AL-AHRAM today, he said that since the crisis broke out, Yemen has persistently and sincerely called for beginning a dialogue to find a peaceful solution based on known historical rights. He added that Yemen has also been calling for negotiations to demarcate the overall maritime borders between the two countries.

The Yemeni ambassador said that what Eritrea did was a hostile act by any standard and described it as a treacherous and sudden act taking advantage of Yemen's good intentions. On 15 December 1995, he added, Eritrea carried out a military operation against Yemeni islands, violating all international norms and charters.

He said Yemen has documents and other evidence that it owns the Hanish islands. He asserted his country's right to and genuine sovereignty over the islands, which he said is nonnegotiable.

French Envoy Arrives in Sanaa on Mediation Mission

JN1201194696 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 12 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] Ambassador Francis Gutmann, special envoy of French President Jacques Chirac, and the delegation accompanying him arrived in Sanaa this evening.

In a statement to the YEMENI NEWS AGENCY, SABA', the French delegation said that the visit comes as part of the interest shown by the French Government, particularly by the French president himself, in the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute, especially since Yemen and Eritrea have agreed to find a peaceful solution to the dispute.

[Begin recording] [Correspondent, in progress] ...your visit to Sanaa?

[Gutmann, in French, fading into Arabic translation] After Yemen and Eritrea agreed to resolve this problem, we are now in the process of doing something to find a peaceful solution to the problem. As we arrive here, we hope to search for the nature of the recent problem, so we can determine whether France can make a practical contribution. However, we cannot make a decision now or give an opinion on this issue. [end recording]

The delegation was welcomed by brothers Dr. 'Abdallah al-Zayn, head of the Information Department at the Presidential Office; Marwan Nu'man, head of the Africa Department at the Foreign Ministry; and (Marcel Logel), French ambassador in Sanaa.

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Makes Statement, Departs Sanaa

JN1501153196 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ambassador Francis Gutmann, President Jacques Chirac's personal envoy, left Sanaa today at the end of a visit to Yemen that lasted several days. During the visit, the French envoy met with brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the Republic, and several government officials.

In a statement to YEMENI NEWS AGENCY, SABA', the French envoy said that he discussed with government officials the possibilities and means of arriving at a peaceful solution to the problem resulting from the Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir. He said that both parties to the conflict wish to reach a peaceful settlement. The French official praised Yemen's position regarding mediation efforts, adding that Yemen highly appreciates the efforts made by the international community for the sake of achieving a peaceful settlement, as Yemen understands the significance of this vital area in the world.

Concluding his statements, the French official said his country will take into account the good Yemeni-French relations in making a positive decision that will lead to a peaceful settlement of the Yemeni-Eritrean conflict.

He was seen off by Dr. 'Abdallah al-Zayn, head of the Presidency's Information Department; state officials; and His Excellency (Marcel Logel), French ambassador in Sanaa.

Yemen's al-Iryani on Alleged Israeli Role

JN1001183496 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1715 GMT 10 Jan 95

[Report on news conference by Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, Yemeni deputy prime minister and foreign minister, in Sanaa on 10 January from the "News Follow-Up" program — italicized passages recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Asked about reports on Israeli involvement in the Eritrean aggression against al-Hanish al-Kabir island and our country's position, Dr. al-Iryani said:

In fact, if it has been proved beyond any doubt that there was a direct Israeli involvement, we would have been very happy to announce this, for several reasons which I do not care to discuss here. But we knew in advance, and we were told by the Eritreans before we had a dispute with them that they received a grant from Israel in the form of a group of four or six boats. This fact was known to us, and we mentioned it in the media. What we know are the statements by the Israeli health minister, and you are aware of them. If you feel that these statements mean direct involvement in the occupation of the island, then I feel you should make the judgment yourself. It is normal for Israel to sympathize with Eritrea. Eritrea has official diplomatic relations with Israel. Do you expect it to support Yemen, which has not yet announced an end to the state of war with Israel?

Asked about the U.S. position on the Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir, the foreign minister said:

From the very first beginning, the United States informed both parties that it wishes to stand neutral on this issue. I can confirm to you that all the U.S. maps that have been issued since the end of World War II and until 1991 show these islands as belonging to the Republic of Yemen or, as in the case of Kamaran, to the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. We could not find a single official U.S. map that shows these islands as belonging to Eritrea or Ethiopia. Official U.S. publications say these islands are Yemeni. There is a publication called OFFICIAL [Standard] NAMES GAZETTEER [preceding three words in English], which is the official journal of official names issued and updated by the United States every few years. The latest issue of this publication says that al- Hanish al-Kabir, al-Hanish al-Saghir, and Jabal Zuqar are Yemeni.

Asked about Yemen's position on the United Arab Emirates' [UAE] dispute with Iran over the islands Iran occupied and the misinterpretations of Yemen's position in the second Gulf War, al- Iryani said:

As regards the Yemeni position on the Iranian occupation of the islands of Tunb al-Kubra, Tunb al-Sughra, and Abu Musa, we have always underlined that the Republic of Yemen recognizes the UAE's sovereignty over these islands. We have never deviated from this position. But on the same basis, we say that the issue must be resolved through peaceful means and that force must not be used as legitimate means to establish right. Might is not right. [preceding four words in English] Incidentally, we have said the same thing to the Ethiopians. Second, any occupation is wrong, and I wish you could find one sentence which Yemen said in the United Nations or anywhere else to demonstrate that Yemen supported the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. [passage omitted]

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Al-Iryani on Results of Ethiopian Mediation

JN0701175496 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 7 Jan 96

[Telephone interview with Yemeni Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, in Sanaa, by Khalil al-Qaryuti, in the studio; date not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Qaryuti] It is noted that mediation efforts have been active without declaring any substantial result on resolving the conflict. What is your comment on this Your Excellency the Minister?

[Al-Iryani] Thank you very much. Undoubtedly, no substantive result has been achieved, but the Ethiopian mediation resulted in a document for a peaceful solution within the framework of international law and International Maritime Law. The two sides received that document, and each side will present its view to the Ethiopian side soon. As for us, the Ethiopian side will receive our reply before the end of this week.

[Al-Qaryuti] Your Excellency the Minister, yesterday reports said that Yemen and Eritrea agreed to withdraw from that island, and that the official Yemeni position will be announced within the next hours. What do you say about this?

[Al-Iryani] The most important thing is how the two sides can agree on a peaceful solution within the framework of international law on their maritime borders and sovereignty over the islands. To search for withdrawals does not represent a solution; a solution will come through reaching a legal framework for a peaceful solution which enables the two sides to find a lasting and firm solution to this problem. Hence, withdrawal is a secondary issue; it is not the main issue. Thank you very much.

[Al-Qaryuti] Thank you sir.

Al-Iryani Briefs Foreign Envoys on Dispute

JN0701181196 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 7 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, today met with his excellency the Italian charge d'affaires whose country is currently chairing the EU, alongy with His Excellency French Ambassador in Sanaa (Marcel Lojel) and the Netherlands charge d'affaires in our country. They discussed relations between our country and the EU states and ways to enhance and promote them.

Brother al-Iryani briefed them on the latest developments and the mediation efforts between our country and Eritrea to reach a peaceful solution to end the Eritrean occupation of the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir.

Yemeni Oppositionist Sees 'Major Mistakes' in Dispute

MM0901140896 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 8 Jan 96 p 6

[Unattributed report: "Al-Jifri: Yemeni Opposition Committed to Popular Position on Hanish"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-HAYAH — 'Abd-al-Rahman 'Ali al-Jifri, leader of the Yemeni National Opposition Front, MAWJ, and the League of the Sons of Yemen, RA'Y, has said that the opposition's stand on the Eritrean invasion of greater Hanish island is "the stand of the Yemeni people as a whole, namely that the occupation of these islands is extremely detrimental to national and Arab national security, and deprives Yemen of its most important advantage which is the possession of a strategic position in the Red Sea."

In a statement in London yesterday al-Jifri added: "What happened was the result of major mistakes by some brothers who are policy makers in Sanaa, such as when they wanted to preempt events by rushing ahead of the others to meet peace. In this they are like a child who tries to walk ahead of a marathon for adults and is swept away by them. Secondly, they neglected strategic and sovereignty issues in order to achieve a local victory. Thirdly, they used the same tactics when addressing local balances on a regional and international scale. These are in my view the biggest mistakes that they made."

He added: "We are not warmongers and believe that local, regional, and international disputes can be resolved by dialogue. However, it was possible to make an honorable stand to prevent Eritrea from reinforcing its positions on the island so that a fait accompli that we would regret is not perpetuated. Also we are against the islands' internationalization. They are Yemeni Arab. This does not mean that we would use them against others, but rather that we would reaffirm sovereignty over the islands."

He added: "We believe that the current regime is not entitled to resolve general, national, and strategic issues, and that this matter concerns all our people's groups. Consequently, the quarter which would legitimately be entitled to do it is a national unity government, the outcome of a comprehensive national reconciliation for which we called, and which alone can bolster the internal front. We believe that the time has come to put aside inflexibility and call immediately for a comprehensive national reconciliation through a dialogue in which all sides would participate."

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Asked what he meant when he said that Yemen should have made an honorable stand, he replied: "I do not want to enter into details. However, the genuine unitarians — whom they call separatists — are ready to cooperate with the regime and work together toward recovering our legitimate rights on greater Hanish island, but it remains to be seen whether our country's rulers would accept that."

Eritrean Coverage of Conflict Over Islands

WA2012150095

For further reportage of the Eritrean-Yemeni confrontation over the Hanish Islands in the Red Sea, including official Eritrean Foreign Ministry statements, please see the East Africa section of the 19 December Sub-Saharan Africa DAILY REPORT and subsequent issues.

Inter-Arab Affairs

APU Condemns U.S. Embassy Move to Jerusalem

JN1101152696 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1200 GMT 11 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Arab Parliamentary Union [APU] has held an emergency session to debate the decision of the U.S. Congress to transfer the American Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Speakers deplored the move, which they said would provoke the feelings of millions of Arabs and Muslims alike. They also said the decision breaches UN resolutions and hinders efforts of the United States, which plays the role of both sponsor of the Middle East peace process and full partner in the negotiations.

The convening of the emergency session at the Parliament building comes at the request of the Jordanian and Palestinian members of the Arab Parliamentary Union.

Al-'Alami Reads Final Statement

JN1101184296 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 11 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Arab Parliamentary Union [APU] Council concluded its 26th extraordinary session held under royal patronage in Amman today, which was dedicated to discussing the U.S. Congressional decision to transfer the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem. [passage omitted]

The final statement included decisions read out by Muhammad Sa'd al-'Alami, head of the Drafting Committee and deputy head of the Moroccan delegation.

[Begin al-'Alami recording] First: Rejecting the U.S. Congress decision on transferring the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, because it conflicts with the resolutions of international legitimacy and the positions of the U.S. Administration on Jerusalem. This decision is also an obstacle to the path of peace. Demanding that the U.S. Congress commit itself to the resolutions of international legitimacy and respect the feelings of Muslims and Christians in the world.

Second: Welcoming the U.S. Administration's position on the U.S. Congressional decision and lauding the positions of all friendly states in the world which rejected this decision for violating international legitimacy and for its negative repercussions on the peace process in light of holy Jerusalem's sublime and distinguished status in the eyes of Muslims and Christians. Hence, encroaching on this status is considered as inflicting harm on their religious beliefs and their firmly held principles.

Third: Rejecting all Israeli measures concerning Jerusalem which affect its religious, demographic, geographic, and cultural nature, and considering these measures as legally null and void; and appealing to the international community to commit Israel to halting the confiscation of lands, settlement activity, and the Judaization of Jerusalem; and stressing the need for Israel to comply with the agreements and pledges not to encroach upon the Palestinian institutions and the Islamic and Christian holy places in Jerusalem in implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Fourth: Holding contacts with the U.S. Congress through the Arab parliaments and the APU to convince it to go back on its decision to transfer the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem; and appealing to all world parliaments to take similar measures.

Fifth: Holding contacts with various states to emphasize their commitment to Security Council Resolution No. 478 of 1980, which stipulates the non-transfer of their diplomatic missions to holy Jerusalem.

Sixth: Setting up a followup committee entrusted with working out a plan of action in order to implement these decisions and other measures the APU will take in this regard. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat Urges U.S. To Intervene on Hebron Issue

JN1301173996 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 13 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat has called on the U.S. Administration to intervene and help remove the obstacles related to the status of Hebron and the withdrawal of occupation forces from the city. At a news conference he and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher held after their meeting in Gaza

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today, President Yasir 'Arafat urged the United States to intercede with the donor states in order to fulfill their commitments toward the Palestinian people and their National Authority.

Secretary Christopher said that his country will offer $71 million to the National Authority. He added that former President Jimmy Carter will head the U.S. delegation which will monitor the Palestinian presidential and legislative elections due to be held on 20 January.

Mahmud 'Abbas, Abu Mazin, member of the PLO Executive Committee, and Minister of Culture Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh attended the meeting on the Palestinian side. Dennis Ross, U.S. coordinator of the peace process, and U.S. Consul-General Edward Abington attended the meeting on the U.S. side.

Cabinet Briefed on 'Arafat-Christopher Talks

JN1401071996 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian Council of Ministers held its weekly meeting yesterday. It called on the Israeli Government to abide by the provisions of the Taba agreement, which stipulate the release of all female prisoners and those above 50 or below 17 years old, in addition to those who have served two thirds of their prison terms. The Council said the number of those released thus far is below the agreed number.

The ministers began their meeting by listening to a report on the results of President 'Arafat's meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher. During that meeting, the president asked for U.S. mediation with the Israeli Government to solve the outstanding problems of prisoners and withdrawal from Hebron.

The ministers also discussed the results of the donor states' conference, which allocated $865 million in aid to the Palestinian Authority. They also discussed the results of President 'Arafat's visit to Tunisia and Algeria as well as preparations for the presidential and legislative elections.

The Council of Ministers expressed satisfaction with the progress made on the Syrian-Israeli track of negotiations, noting that Lebanon should be involved in the peace process.

Preparations for Elections Described

NC1401080296 Paris AFP in English 0027 GMT 14 Jan 96

[Report by Ben Lynfield]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ramallah, West Bank, Jan 14 (AFP) — Yasir 'Arafat's supporters and his candidates in historic Palestinian self-rule elections on Saturday [20 January] hope the poll will help lay the cornerstone for a future independent state.

"The elections could give us a new potential toward our objective of a Palestinian state," said Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, a veteran nationalist and candidate in Gaza City known for his independent stand from 'Arafat.

"You cannot make use of the potential you have except on a democratic basis," he said.

'Arafat's top advisers, many of whom are running for an 88-member council, are billing the elections as a major advance for the Palestinians after the launch of self-rule in 1993 and its expansion late last year beyond the Gaza Strip and Jericho into heartland towns and villages of the West Bank.

"There is no doubt we are taking a significant step towards independence," said Ahmad Quray', a candidate in the Jerusalem district, and a key negotiator of the 1993 Oslo autonomy agreement with Israel.

"The elections are part of the agreement. The agreement is being implemented correctly, and the agreement will lead towards independence," he said.

But some analysts say that beyond the rhetoric, the polling has more to do with strengthening the rule of 'Arafat's Fatah movement than leaping ahead to a still elusive statehood.

"It is hilarious to think we are on the brink of an independent state when there are Jewish settlements preventing territorial contiguity" in the West Bank, said Manuel Hasasian, a political scientist at Bethlehem University.

"These elections are being dominated by the one-party system of Fatah and supported to an extent by large tribal clans which will promote candidates. They will serve to strengthen the one-party system," he said.

The majority of the 672 candidates participating in the elections are 'Arafat supporters running either on Fatah lists or as independents.

Separate polling is also being held for the position of head of the executive authority, with 'Arafat expected to trounce his sole challenger, Samiha Khalil, a 72-year-old left-wing activist from the West Bank town of al-Birah.

The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), the strongest opposition group, is boycotting the vote but has been careful not to disrupt the campaign or its relations with Fatah.

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Through a series of rallies in memory of Hamas bomb-maker Yahya 'Ayyash, Israel's most wanted suspect who was killed on January 5, the group has demonstrated a broad popularity in contrast to the election gatherings of Fatah.

"We aren't participating in the elections and we aren't using violence to boycott them," said Hassan Yusuf, a Hamas activist in the West Bank.

"The Palestinian people can decide what it wants but we have the right to show the dangers of going to the polls."

Fatah, in its rallies, has depicted itself as master of all phases of the Palestinian struggle.

"The first bullet, the first stone, the first in building our state," said a poster at a gathering of nearly 1,000 people in "liberated" Ramallah as speakers repeatedly termed the West Bank town.

Fatah leaders have stressed that the priority on Saturday is a sizable turnout among the 1.01 million registered voters.

This would be seen as an approval for self-rule and the staged approach to statehood Fatah advocates, but which Hamas rejects as a sell-out of rights to all of historic Palestine.

"The main thing is a large number of people voting, this will strengthen the authority and provide new legitimacy for the people," said Marwan Barghuti, the Fatah secretary-general in the West Bank.

'Arafat's backers say Hamas has failed to seize the chance to field candidates, and the elections will furnish further proof that most Palestinians support him and the peace process with Israel.

"'Arafat has led his people for 30 years, achieved international stature, made bold decisions and is a symbol," said Jonathan Kuttab, a pro-'Arafat candidate in Jerusalem.

"There is no competition in sight, but that does not mean these aren't democratic elections."

'Arafat Accuses Israel of Blocking Campaigns

NC1501120396 Paris AFP in English 1121 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riyadh, Jan 15 (AFP)—Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat on Monday [15 January] accused Israel of blocking the election campaigns of Palestinian candidates in east Jerusalem.

"The Palestinian Authority is confronted with difficulties in preparing the elections" for January 20, the first to be held in the autonomous Palestinian territories, Arafat told AFP while on a visit to Saudi Arabia.

'Arafat said "certains parties in Israel" were blocking the campaigns.

On Sunday candidate Hanan Ashrawi was roughed up by the police and two of her guards were arrested at a roadblock into Jerusalem. Police tried to prevent Ashrawi, the former Palestinian spokeswoman, from entering her district in a car covered with election posters.

There were reports of other clashes between Palestinians and Israeli police in annexed east Jerusalem.

'Arafat visited Saudi Arabia to inquire about the health of King Fahd who was hospitalized for a week at the start of December for what doctors said was treatment of a blood clot on the brain.

He met Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, who was asked on January 1 by the Saudi leader to run affairs of state in his absence.

It was 'Arafat's third visit to Saudi Arabia since he reconciled with Riyadh in January 1994. Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Arab state accused him of supporting Iraq after the 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Riyadh, which had been until 1990 one of the main aid donors for the Palestinians, pledged to contribute up to 100 million dollars for international efforts to rebuild the Palestinian territories.

Israeli 'Obstacles' to Elections Criticized

JN1101164896 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 11 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat and Carl Lidbom, head of the international observers of Palestinian legislative elections, have criticized the Israeli obstacles impeding free elections in occupied Jerusalem.

During a meeting with Arye 'Amit, inspector of Israeli police in Jerusalem, they demanded that the post offices that are to receive voters should be open all day long on the day of elections.

Likud Posters Said Threatening Jerusalem Voters

TA1501131896 Jerusalem JMCC PRESS SERVICE in English 15 Jan 96

[Received via fax]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Israeli Likud Party plastered posters throughout East Jerusalem last night threatening to revoke the Jerusalem ID cards of all

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Jerusalemites who vote in the Palestinian elections this Saturday.

The poster is in black and white, and was gluded on top of the posters of Palestinian candidates in prominent places in the city, especially the main Salah al-Din Street near the post office and central court. It has the word, "Caution," in Hebrew in the large letters on the bottom, with the following Arabic text:

"Warning and Caution to the Honorable Resident: This Saturday, 20 January 1996, elections for the National Authority will be held in Jerusalem. Any resident of Jerusalem who votes in the Authority elections might lose his Israeli ID card. We beg you to think and think again before voting. You have to decide between voting for the Authority or keeping you Israeli ID card."

The poster is signed by Danny Danun, head of the Likud Youth Party.

Quray' on Israeli Interference; Candidate Killed

JN1401070496 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0500 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ahmad Quray', a prominent Palestinian candidate, the chief Palestinian negotiator, and the minister of economy in the Palestinian Authority, said that Israeli authorities are obstructing the election campaign for Palestinian candidates in Jerusalem. Quray' is leading the Fatah Movement's list for the constituency of occupied East Jerusalem.

He told reporters: I am concerned over the date of elections because the Israelis are placing large obstacles to these elections. The Israeli Army is making many arrests, and people cannot come.

Quray' added that Israeli border guards prevented his convoy from arriving at the place of campaigning which was scheduled to be held in a school. Many Palestinian candidates also complained about the Israeli authorities' interference in their election campaigns. Palestinian officials said that Israeli policemen removed the candidates' posters in East Jerusalem and that these candidates have to obtain a permit from the Israeli police for every election rally.

In another development, Palestinian sources said that a Palestinian candidate was killed and that another civilian and two Palestinian policemen were wounded in the West Bank village of Yattah while Palestinian police were trying to arrest 15 people, including the killed man, Isma'il Abu-Hamid, the former mayor of the village who was suspected of collaboration with the Israeli authorities.

Palestinian security officials added that this campaign aimed to arrest arms and drug smugglers as well as collaborators with Israel.

AFP Contradicts Report of Killing

NC1401112496 Paris AFP in English 1103 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Hebron, West Bank, Jan 14 (AFP) — One person was killed and two injured in a gunbattle as Palestinian police detained an election candidate and dozens of other people in a West Bank village, police said Sunday [14 January].

Jibril Rajub, head of preventive security, said the gunbattle erupted late Saturday when police raided homes in Yattah village near Hebron in search of illegal weapons, forged documents and stolen cars.

A passer-by in a car was shot dead and two policemen injured, one of them seriously. Mayor Isma'il Abu-Hamid, who has been accused of collaborating with the Israeli authorities, was among those detained.

The mayor and all 40 other people were Sunday released on bail, Palestinian sources reported. They said news of their arrest had been greeted with celebrations in the streets of Yattah.

Rajub said the raid and arrests were part of a crackdown on crime to restore order in the village.

Abu-Hamid is running as an independent in Saturday's elections to a self-rule council. Israeli troops withdrew from his village under a West Bank autonomy deal.

'Ashrawi Prevented From Entering Jerusalem

JN1401152096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Central Election Committee sources have said that there are serious differences between the National Authority and the Israeli Government regarding the shape of the Jerusalem ballot boxes. The Central Election Committee insists on using the same boxes in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and the occupied city of Jerusalem.

It is worth noting that the Israeli Government places many obstacles to prevent a large number of the holy city's citizens from participating in the elections, in addition to its continuous harassment of the candidates in an attempt to obstruct their election campaigns.

The Israeli occupation forces prevented Dr. Hanan 'Ashrawi from entering the occupied city of Jerusalem. These forces arrested two of Dr. 'Ashrawi's assistants on the pretext of refusing to remove posters from her

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car. This took place at the al-Dahiyah checkpoint at the entrance to occupied Jerusalem.

The occupation forces had earlier prevented Miss Zahirah Kamal [former peace talks delegate] from entering the holy city for the same reason.

Prevented From Campaigning in Jerusalem

TA1301131596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 13 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] With the Palestinian election campaign well underway, the Palestinian Broadcasting radio station has begun broadcasting election propaganda. Several hundred candidates are taking part and each one has been allocated two to three minutes of air time.

Palestinian official Hanan 'Ashrawi was prevented from entering Jerusalem yesterday. 'Ashrawi had planned to campaign in East Jerusalem. She and a number of supporters were turned away at the al-Ram checkpoint.

Meanwhile, a team of 33 Egyptian observers is to join the international mission supervising the Palestinian council elections. Also due to take part is former U.S. President Jimmy Carter.

Said 'Roughed Up' by Israeli Police

NC1401112696 Paris AFP in English 1058 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jerusalem, Jan 14 (AFP) — Israeli police roughed up Palestinian election candidate Hanan 'Ashrawi and arrested her two guards at a checkpoint into annexed east Jerusalem on Sunday [14 January], her campaign aides said.

They said the guards were also beaten up as police refused to allow 'Ashrawi's car to cross into Bayt Hanina for an election rally because it was plastered with posters, in defiance of strict restrictions laid down by Israel on campaigning within Jerusalem.

The two guards were arrested after a scuffle broke out. 'Ashrawi, an independent running in east Jerusalem for a seat in the Palestinian self-rule council, said she would not leave the scene until they were released.

A crowd of around 300 people who had been waiting for 'Ashrawi in Bayt Hanina went instead to the nearby checkpoint between the West Bank and the annexed sector of Jerusalem to hear her give a speech.

It was the latest in a series of incidents in Jerusalem ahead of the January 20 vote.

The office of another candidate in the city, Jonathan Kuttab, said police beat up their campaign workers on Saturday for putting up posters.

Police said posters had to be restricted to 35 billboards set aside by the municipality. But most election workers are ignoring the order and plastering shops and homes with posters at the risk of confrontation with police.

Under its peace agreement with the Palestinian Authority, Israel is allowing east Jerusalem residents to participate in the elections but insists on its sovereignty over all of Jerusalem.

Accuses Israel of 'Disinformation'

TA1501173096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dr. Hanan 'Ashrawi, who is standing as an independent candidate in the Jerusalem district for the Palestinian elections, has accused Israel of interfering in the elections and preventing campaigning in Jerusalem. 'Ashrawi has been turned back a number of times by police at roadblocks into Jerusalem and prevented from canvassing in East Jerusalem's neighborhoods. Yesterday Israel's coordinator of activities in the territories, Major General Oren Shahor, accused 'Ashrawi of provocation and infringing the Israeli-Palestinian Authority agreement concerning the elections in Jerusalem. Reporter Mark Weiss asked 'Ashrawi how she responds to these accusations:

[Begin recording] ['Ashrawi] There is no infringement, there are no restrictions on posters or signs, particularly on private property. The only thing the agreement says is that the publicity or the information campaigns would be coordinated with the Palestinian Central Elections Committee, and my reference is only the Palestinian Central Elections Committee. I'm in touch with them every day, I coordinate with them on every step. The Israelis not only are manipulating the agreement, they are reading it their own way and they are also creating facts. I suggest they read the agreement and they stick to it.

[Weiss] How has this harmed your efforts to canvas freely?

['Ashrawi] Of course it harms my efforts, all the time. Every step is an uphill battle, every step. We have the right to reach our constituency, we have the right to campaign, we have the right to speak out freely, and we have the right to move freely. We are, after all, candidates from Jerusalem and we have the right to move in and around Jerusalem freely. Israel signed an agreement about this, they should honor this agreement. I'm very suspicious about the way they implement their agreements. They sign something, and then proceed immediately to negate it and to violate it. This is unacceptable, whether it is prisoners or whether it is our

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right campaign, or whether it is the question of freedom of movement and freedom of speech.

[Weiss] Do you find confusion amongst East Jerusalem residents about where they have to vote, whether it's one of the post offices or they are going to be bused outside the municipal (?boundaries)?

['Ashrawi] People still don't know where to vote. Today we have a list, we will publicize it. It is entirely unfair. This is another problem, because it's going to create tremendous hardships, physical hardships for people to get to voting stations. And this is also another obstacle in the elections and another interference, in addition to the fact that they allow all sorts of posters of disinformation, of blatant lies, of clear threats by people in the Likud and the Israeli opposition to try to intimidate our public, and yet we cannot reach them to talk to them freely about realities and truth. This is entirely illegal, unacceptable, and I think the Israelis should be held responsible for their actions. [end recording]

Al-Husayni Urges Jerusalem Arabs To Vote

JN1501185896 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1220 GMT 15 Jan 96

[Telephone interview with Faysal al-Husayni, member of the Palestinian Authority responsible for the Jerusalem file, by Yusuf al-Mahmud; place not given; from the "Today's Events" program — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Mahmud] On the line with us is Faysal al-Husayni, official in charge of the Jerusalem file. Good evening Abu-al-'Abd.

[Al-Husayni] Good evening.

[Al-Mahmud] Israeli right-wing activists are putting up posters which seem to contain threats to Palestinian voters and candidates in Jerusalem. In addition, the occupation authorities are placing obstacles before the candidates in Jerusalem. What do you have to say about this?

[Al-Husayni] In accordance with the Palestinian-Israeli agreement cosigned by the United States, Russia, European states, and all the world, the bearers of blue identification cards in East Jerusalem have the right to vote and run for election without harming their current status and right to live in East Jerusalem. However, this is a source of anxiety for the Israelis. This is because they and the entire world consider the elections a Palestinian referendum on Jerusalem to say that Jerusalem is Palestinian, not Israeli. Therefore, Israeli right-wing and even government quarters are trying to create an atmosphere that would lead to the erosion of enthusiasm toward the elections. They want only a small number to show up at the polling centers, so that Israel would be able to say that the Palestinian referendum on Jerusalem was not in favor of the Palestinian side. They want to say that, on the contrary, the number of Palestinians who went to the Palestinian Assembly elections was a little more or less than those who went to the Israeli municipal elections. They want to say that the Palestinian will in Jerusalem is Israeli rather than Palestinian. This is a serious situation of which all our people must be aware. They should not listen to or be affected by this Israeli propaganda, which primarily aims at preventing our people from going to the polls by any means. We must foil and block this endeavor. In fact, the largest possible number of Palestinians must go to the polls.

Meanwhile, I would like to address some Palestinian brothers who believe that by calling on the Palestinians to boycott the elections, they would be serving a Palestinian cause. In fact, they are doing nothing but being a tool that serves the Israeli interest in preventing the Palestinians from going to the polls. What is the stand of those Palestinians who exhort the Palestinians not to go to the elections on the pretext that the elections do not meet the Palestinian demands, supporting their argument by a religious fatwa [ruling] and unfounded allegations? What will this eventually lead to and what purpose will it serve? If those people succeed in their calls, will it not be a service to Israel when it stands on 22 or 23 January to declare that the number of Palestinians who went to the Jerusalem elections shows that the Palestinian will in Jerusalem is not Palestinian but Israeli, and that the population of Jerusalem are interested more in national insurance than their national rights? I ask every Palestinian to reject this logic. I ask every Palestinian involved in the call for boycotting the elections to let his national and religious conscience be his judge and to avoid doing something that serves nobody by the enemy interests. We should either be on the side of Jerusalem, Palestine, Arabism, and Islam, or on the side of Zionism and the Likud. He who calls for boycotting the elections, knowingly or unknowingly, willingly or unwillingly, would only be paving a broad avenue for the Zionist movement to control Jerusalem.

[Al-Mahmud] Yes, Mr. al-Husayni, the continued obstacles and threats, especially now only a few days before the elections, are considered violations of the Palestinian-Israeli agreement. Have these violations been discussed with the Israeli side?

[Al-Husayni] Yes. These violations are discussed with the Israeli side. As we fully know, the Israeli side will try to confuse matters. It will try to procrastinate and prevaricate. However, we must eventually go to the ballot boxes so as not to let these Israeli acts or provocations succeed in preventing us from going. By all these provocations, they want the Palestinian voters

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to stay at home and not go to the polls. We must foil this Israeli scheme and go, all of us, to the polling centers no matter how stressful the Israeli harassments may become.

[Al-Mahmud] Are the elections, then, considered somewhat of a crucial battle on Jerusalem?

[Al-Husayni] I would rather say that they are an important and essential battle. Israel may strongly try to use the results, if they are not in our favor, in any coming elections or against any international logic saying that Jerusalem is Arab. We must not allow them to obtain a new weapon, no matter how weak it may be. We must deny them this weapon. There is no better way to deny them this weapon than to go to the ballot boxes. Once again, I tell the brothers who call for boycotting the elections: Let your conscience be your judge and fear God with regard to the destiny of Jerusalem.

[Al-Mahmud] Can we say, then, that for the sake of the future of Jerusalem, Jerusalemites should head for the polling centers on election day?

[Al-Husayni] Yes, this is so that Jerusalem will be Arab and Islamic as we want it to be and as it was and will be, God willing.

[Al-Mahmud] Thank you, Mr. Faysal al-Husayn.

[Al-Husayni] Thank you.

Hamas Urges Attacks on Israel, Election Boycott

TA1401082596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] has resumed terrorist attacks against Israel in the wake of the assassination of Yahya 'Ayyash, and the movement has called on its followers to boycott the elections for the autonomy council. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports:

[Ben-Menahem] Hamas has sharpened the tone of its statements against the Palestinian Authority [PA], and in its latest leaflet it accused senior Palestinian police officials of helping the Israeli Shin Bet assassinate Yahya 'Ayyash. The leaflet claims that the Palestinian officials helped locate 'Ayyash's hiding place.

In the leaflet, Hamas expresses regret over the fact that 'Ayyash's assassination followed a series of contacts with the PA in Cairo. Until now, Hamas, in accordance with the agreements reached with the PA, has refrained from calling for a boycott of the elections following 'Ayyash's assassination. In its latest leaflet, however, Hamas calls on its followers to boycott the balloting.

At yesterday's mass rally in Ramallah in memory of 'Ayyash, masked Hamas activists urged the crowds to boycott the elections for the autonomy council. Hamas sources said the movement had decided to change its tactics which had hitherto called for a halt to terrorist attacks against targets inside Israel until after the elections in the territories. [passage omitted]

The Islamic Jihad has also announced that it will carry out terrorist attacks to avenge Yahya 'Ayyash's assassination.

Palestinian security sources assessed that the change in Hamas' policy with regard to the elections and the resumption of terrorist attacks stems from pressure exerted by the Hamas leadership abroad. This policy change aims to make things difficult for the PA. It remains unclear what kind of steps 'Arafat will take against Hamas, if he decides to act against the movement at all, in light of the change in its policy.

PFLP, DFLP Campaign To Boycott Elections

TA1401192096 Jerusalem JMCC PRESS SERVICE in English 14 Jan 96

[Received via fax]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The unified central leadership of the PFLP [Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine] and DFLP [Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine] launched a campaign calling for boycott of the presidential and Council elections.

The central leadership issued an announcement calling upon the opposition front members to immediately begin in the 'election boycott battle'. The campaign includes the distribution of posters, stickers and election boycott cards in addition to the unified central leadership statements. The campaign also includes seminars, festivals and popular debates in addition to TV panels.

The two Fronts aim to acquire their information from the international observers committees, and to establish relations with the observation committees, human rights organizations and Palestinian NGO [nongovernmental organization] Network in order for these bodies to attend the Fronts' activities.

The PFLP and DFLP want to use the issue of prisoners as the central issue in their agitative program, by asking prisoners' families to participate in the boycott activities and to be present at the voting boxes to call on voters not to vote. Meanwhile the unified central leadership will widen its framework of election boycott battle by organizing meetings with the Islamic forces (Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and [Islamic] Jihad) so as to declare a joint position on the boycott and to prepare for a joint press conference.

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Moreover, it decided, in order to insure a successful mechanism to implement its program, to form a joint media committee that will handle press releases and media coverage of this counter election campaign.

Another joint committee will be in Jerusalem and a special joint committee in Ramallah to reactivate the National Islamic Committee for prisoners support. Some of the opposition forces are evaluating the possibility of calling for a prisons strike before the election date in the framework of its agitation battle on the elections that will take place while thousands of prisoners remain in the Israeli occupation prisons.

Palestinians in Syria Urge Elections Boycott

NC1401123896 Paris AFP in English 1229 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damascus, Jan 14 (AFP) — Representatives of the 400,000 Palestinians living in Syria called Sunday [14 January] for a boycott of this week's historic elections in the Palestinian autonomous areas.

The representatives of the 13 Palestinian refugee camps in Syria issued a statement after talks saying Saturday's elections were aimed at "legitimizing the Oslo accord on Palestinian autonomy by electing a council whose goal is to carry out this accord, which is rejected by the people."

"These elections strike a blow to the unity of the Palestinian people because they ignore the right of return of Palestinian refugees to their country, who represent 75 percent of the Palestinian people," the statement said.

On Monday, the Democratic and the Popular Fronts for the Liberation of Palestine, both opposed to the peace accord with Israel, renewed their call for a boycott of the "rigged" elections.

The first Palestinian general elections are to be held on Saturday, January 20, to elect an 88-member autonomy council and president as set out in accords with Israel to establish self-rule in the Gaza Strip and towns on the West Bank.

900 Prisoners Freed; 300 More To Be Released

JN1001201296 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 10 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Some 300 Palestinian prisoners are scheduled to be released from the Israeli occupation prisons tomorrow. The occupation troops released 900 detainees today. This is in implementation of the Oslo B agreement, which provides for the release of the second group of detainees before the legislative elections. As soon as the freed prisoners arrived in Palestinian towns, they were greeted by their families and jubilant crowds.

'Thousands' Greet Prisoners

JN1001162096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 10 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The second group of Palestinians released from Israeli prisons has arrived in the Gaza Strip.

Our correspondent in Gaza 'Aidl al-Za'un is with us on the telephone line:

[Begin al-Za'un recording] Amid happiness mixed with sadness and pain, thousands of citizens received the freed prisoners, who were released from the Israeli occupation prisons at 1500 [local time] today.

The citizens gathered near eastern al-Shuja'iyah crossing, known as Nahal 'Oz crossing, to receive their freed sons and relatives. The citizens sang patriotic songs and welcomed the freed prisoners.

So far, 37 [as heard] prisoners have been freed; eight from Ashqelon Prison, five from Nafha Prison, and only 26 from the desert Negev Prison. [passage omitted]

Meanwhile, citizens here are awaiting the arrival of the rest of the prisoners to be released today, which includes 200 from the Gaza Strip. [end recording]

The first batch of 35 freed prisoners arrived in Janin this afternoon. They were detained at the Israeli Magiddo Prison.

The citizens celebrated this occasion at the headquarters of the National Security Forces. The celebration was attended by Colonel Fayiz 'Arafat, commander of the forces in the Janin area, and several representatives of national forces and establishments.

It is scheduled that 900 prisoners will be freed from Israeli prisons today, and 300 others are due to freed tomorrow in implementation of the Oslo B agreement on releasing the second batch of prisoners before legislative elections, scheduled to be held on 20 January.

Female Prisoners Refuse To Go Free

TA1101191296 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 11 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Palestinian female prisoners whose release has been authorized by the Israeli authorities are still refusing to go free. Our correspondent Uri Kohen-Aharonov reports that they have gathered in two cells at Hasharon prison, together with the

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five female prisoners convicted of murdering Israelis who are not scheduled for release.

Today, relatives and friends danced around 121 additional Palestinian prisoners who were released near the Nahal 'Oz checkpoint. A similar number of prisoners were released in the West Bank. Among those released today were prisoners convicted of murdering Arabs who collaborated with Israel. The latter will be banned from entering Israel until they have completed the full term of their sentence. Palestinian sources complained that instead of releasing Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] prisoners, Israel chose to free workers caught staying in Israel without permits.

[A similar report on Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew at 1800 GMT on 11 January notes that the female prisoners scheduled for release "are demanding that the five female prisoners who were convicted of murdering Jews also be freed. Yesterday, at the end of their daily walk in the prison yard, the female prisoners barricaded themselves inside two cells and declared a hunger strike. The Prison Service Authority does not intend to use force for the time being."] [passage omitted]

Police Reportedly Foil Abu-Nidal 'Terrorist' Campaign

NC1401100696 Paris AFP in English 0859 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Gaza City, Gaza Strip, Jan 14 (AFP) — Palestinian police have captured members of the radical Abu-Nidal group who were preparing an assassination and bombing campaign against the Palestinian-controlled territories, officials said Sunday [14 January].

A spokesman for Palestinian security chief Amin al-Hindi said a group of Abu-Nidal followers were arrested in the Gaza Strip two weeks ago and more were being sought. He did not say how many people were detained.

He said the militants had planned to assassinate top-level Palestinian leaders and carry out bombings near schools in Palestinian areas in a bid to undermine the peace process between Israel and Yasir 'Arafat's Palestinian Authority.

The group headed by Abu-Nidal, Fatah Revolutionary Council, is a radical breakaway faction from 'Arafat's Fatah movement which has claimed responsibility for numerous terrorist attacks.

Abu-Nidal, who real name is Sabri al-Banna, is considered one of 'Arafat's fiercest enemies and the two have called for each other's deaths.

In an interview published Sunday in the semi-official Palestinian daily AL HAYAT AL-JADIDAH, al-Hindi said his agents had "arrested a big group of Abu-Nidal terrorists in the Palestinian Authority area who were preparing assassinations of important Palestinian leaders."

He said a large quantity of modern weapons and explosives were discovered, showing that the group could "carry out a lot of serious terrorist attacks...designed to blow up the security situation and spread fear in the Palestinian areas."

"The aim of Abu-Nidal is to stop peace process, they don't want us to return to our homeland," said al-Hindi.

"Abu-Nidal is continuing his activity to derail the peace process through assassinations and other terrorist actions," he said. "We are continuing to hunt for members of this group."

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Algeria

Zeroual-UN Talks on Western Sahara Reported

Officials Hold Talks

LD0901181296 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1100 GMT 9 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At the presidency this morning, President of the Republic Liamine Zeroual received Chinmaya Gharekhan, UN assistant secretary general and the UN secretary general's special envoy for the Western Sahara. The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf and Ramadan Laamamra, Algeria's permanent representative at the United Nations.

[Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic at 1700 GMT on 9 January adds in a related report: "After the meeting, Mr. Gharekhan gave a statement to the press in which he said that he discussed the issue of Western Sahara with the president of the republic and exchanged points of view with him over the issue, adding that he will submit a report on the issue to the Security Council."]

UN Envoy 'Very Pleased'

LD0901223696 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 9 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Following a tour which took him to Rabat, his visit to the Saharan refugees' camp, and his stop in Nouakchott, Chinmaya Gharekhan, the UN special envoy on Western Sahara, who has been in our country since yesterday, was received today at the headquarters of the presidency by Liamine Zeroual, president of the republic, and delivered to the latter a message from Mr. Butrus-Ghali, the UN secretary general. [passage omitted]

The UN secretary general's envoy briefed the president of the republic — since Algeria is an official observer of the peace process — on the outcome of his mission in the region, which is within the framework of intensifying the consultations between the two sides to the conflict in Western Sahara as required by the UN Security Council.

Following this audience, and while he was leaving the office of the president of the republic, Chinmaya Gharekhan gave the following statement to the television.

[Begin Gharekhan recording, in French with superimposed Arabic translation] I was received by his excellency the president of the republic, and we had very cordial talks. I was very pleased with these talks which I had with the president. The aim of my presence here is to exchange points of view over the issue of Western Sahara, which was the topic of our discussion. Now, I will prepare a report to the UN secretary general and the Security Council. [end recording]

GIA Admits Killing FIS Leaders Said, Redjem

LD1301192196 Paris Radio France International in French 1730 GMT 13 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In Algeria, the GIA, the Armed Islamic Group, today claimed responsibility for the assassination of two Islamist leaders, Mohamed Said [alias for Lounes Belkacem, killed on 22 September 1994] and Abdelrazak Redjem, two former leaders of the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS].

This claim comes a few days after the decision by the GIA, the most radical of the armed movements, to declare war on the Islamic Salvation Army, the AIS, which is considered to be the armed wing of the Islamic Salvation Front.

Division Among Islamic Movement Factions Increasing

LD1501100496 Paris Radio France International in French 0730 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] There have been new developments in the struggle between different factions within the Islamist movement in Algeria. The GIA, the Armed Islamic Group, in a communique has threatened to kill nine people, among them the commander of the Islamic Salvation Army [Madani Merzak] and his deputy [Ben Aicha]. It invites them to hand themselves over to an Islamic court in order to avoid the sentence being carried out.

On 13 January, in another communique, the GIA claimed responsibility for the assassination of two men suspected of attempting to infiltrate the movement.

Since November's presidential election, divisions seem to be increasing within the Islamic rebel movement — divisions that have already resulted in several hundred deaths.

South Africa's Pik Botha Holds News Conference

LD1101211596 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 11 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia today received Mr. Pik Botha, the South African mineral and energy affairs minister.

The South African minister held a news conference right after this meeting. Dalila Bouhenna, our correspondent in Djenane El-Mithak, sent the following report on this news conference:

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[Bouhenna] Mr. Pik Botha described his visit to Algeria as very successful and beneficial and expressed his admiration for the great progress Algeria has achieved in the fields of energy and industry.

Mr. Botha expressed readiness to endeavor to improve relations between the two countries because, he said, there are aspects of similarity and complementarity between Algeria and South Africa. Algeria could benefit from South African mining experience in view of the world reputation this country has in this field, while Algeria could be of benefit to South Africa in the electricity, petrochemical, and gas industries. South Africa, Mr. Botha indicated, is considered to be the only country in the southern half of Africa able to market natural gas to the other countries of that region, therefore, Algeria could be of benefit to South Africa in this field.

Mr. Botha went on to say that this visit is taking place within the framework of acquainting himself with Algeria's capabilities and attempting to find joint fields of cooperation and exchange of expertise.

In answering journalists' questions regarding his talks with Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia, Mr. Botha said that he had submitted a report on his visit to Algeria and expressed his readiness to open up areas of cooperation between the two countries. In exchange, Mr. Botha said, the prime minister entrusted me with conveying an invitation to Mr. Nelson Mandela to visit Algeria shortly.

On the possibility of implementing partnership between the two countries, Mr. Botha stressed that the possibilities and conditions for this are available.

IMF Said To Confirm Soundness of Economy

LD1301200296 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 13 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Following the campaign by some French newspapers to cast doubt on the efficiency of the implementation of the economic program concluded with Algeria, the IMF has given the lie to these rumors, and through figures confirmed Algeria's commitment positively to carry out the program for economic efficiency. Here is a report by Nassira Ait Salah:

[Salah] At a time when Algeria, despite difficult and sometimes tragic circumstances, is stressing that it remains committed to its pledges to the international monetary institutions, foreign circles such as French newspapers are playing down this effort, and going as far as talking about a failure of the plan for economic efficiency concluded between Algeria and the IMF.

However, an IMF source in Washington has, with figures, confirmed that the program concluded with Algeria has been carried out positively, and the efficiency criteria have been met, and even at times surpassed. The IMF source has thus put an end to all these rumors that tarnish Algeria's credibility. The same source pointed out that the budget deficit, for instance, had been cut down to 9.8 billion dinars, and inflation had been cut from 37 percent to 22 percent by the end of December 1995.

A meeting is now expected of the IMF administration board to undertake an ordinary review of the agreement concluded with Algeria. At any rate, all this data show that Algeria, in comparison with other countries, is regarded as one of the few countries that meet their commitments to the international monetary institutions, and that Algeria indeed deserves the support of the international community, given its courageous decisions. This is confirmed by decision-makers at the international monetary institutions.

World Bank Official Optimistic Over Economic Prospects

LD1201102796 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 0600 GMT 12 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Danny Ritchie, official in charge of the North Africa and the Middle East department at the World Bank, expressed his optimism for the development of the economy in Algeria, which has recorded a growth rate estimated at 4.5 percent for the first time in ten years.

The World Bank official pointed out in an interview published yesterday in the weekly JEUNE AFRIQUE that this result exceeded the result recorded in Morocco and Tunisia, and that the Algerian economy was characterized in 1995 by the takeoff of production at a growth rate estimated at 20 percent in the agricultural sector, despite the registered drought, plus the takeoff of the construction sector, and the vigor of the private sector which has become active and managed to double production of infrastructures in 1995.

The World Bank official added that Algeria has large potential and is considered among the most important oil and gas producers, and that the discovery of new wells in 1995 gave positive results. He also assessed Algeria's overall revenue in 1997 to be between $10-12 billion, in addition to the revenue from gas, which will exceed $2 billion.

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Egypt

U.S. Vice President Gore Pays Short Visit

Gore Arrives in Cairo

NC1501063896 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0200 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Jan (MENA) — U.S. Vice President Al Gore arrived in Cairo early today on a short visit to Egypt. President Husni Mubarak and Al Gore are expected to attend the Egyptian-U.S. Council of Presidency meeting later today. President Mubarak and Gore will then hold an international news conference.

During the visit the U.S. vice president will meet Prime Minister Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri and People's Assembly Speaker Dr. Ahmad Fathi Surur. The talks will deal with ways to boost bilateral investment and trade exchange. The talks will also deal with bilateral economic relations. Gore and the Egyptian officials will review the peace efforts in the region.

Gore was received on arrival by Electricity Minister Mahir Abazah and members of the U.S. staff in Cairo.

Mubarak, Gore Hold Talks

NC1501083196 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0810 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Jan (MENA) — President Husni Mubarak held a session of talks at the Presidential Office this morning with U.S. Vice President Al Gore, who arrived in Cairo earlier.

Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first undersecretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, and the chief of the U.S. White House Staff, Leon Firth [name as received], attended the talks.

Officials Join Talks

NC1501094296 Cairo MENA in English
0858 GMT 15 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, 15 Jan (MENA) — President Husni Mubarak and U.S. Vice President Al Gore completed their talks in a plenary session that was attended by Prime Minister Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri, Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, and first foreign undersecretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs Dr. Usamah al-Baz. The White House chief of staff, U.S. Ambassador in Cairo Edward Walker, undersecretary of state for economic agriculture and business affairs Joan Spero attended the meeting. Undersecretary of Treasury Jeffrey Shafer and USAID Administrator Brian Atwood also attended the plenary session.

Gore Interviewed on Peace Process

NC1501113696 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1050 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Jan (MENA) — U.S. Vice President Al Gore has stated that the prospects for peace in the Middle East are now much better than at any time in the past 15 years, thanks to the leading role played by Egypt and President Husni Mubarak.

Speaking on the television program "Good Morning Egypt," Gore said Egypt initiated the peace process, ahead of any other country in the region, and that it handled this process ably. Then, he added, all parties moved toward peace following Egypt's lead.

The U.S. vice president said President Mubarak's words of advice pushed the peace process toward completing the talks with the Palestinians in Taba and led to the accords that were later signed with Israel.

Gore expressed his belief that this year will be decisive in achieving peace in the entire region, after which efforts will be made to raise the standard of living and achieve progress and prosperity for all the region's nations.

Commenting on investment in Egypt, Gore said that interest by Americans, Asians, and Europeans in investing in Egypt increased following reforms carried out during President Mubarak's reign, meaning more job opportunities.

He pointed out that countries experiencing population growth must achieve quicker economic growth rates to create new jobs and that this means privatization and reform.

Gore emphasized that providing convenient circumstances for investment in any country is of great importance in creating jobs and in privatization to boost the economy, especially in the private sector. He noted that the private sector in a country such as Indonesia plays a major role in this regard.

Asked whether the Egyptian-U.S. partnership agreement covers issues such as health and development, he said that the health program included in this agreement is progressing well.

He noted that this program is a vital element in children's medical diagnosis and vaccination in Egypt. He added: We have learned a great deal from the Egyptian campaign in this field.

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Mubarak, Gore Hold News Conference

NC1501132596 Cairo ESC Television in Arabic 1109 GMT 15 Jan 96

[News conference by President Husni Mubarak and U.S. Vice President Al Gore with unidentified correspondents following talks in Cairo — live, in English]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Mubarak] Once again I met with Vice President Gore, the man who initiated the process of cooperation, and, as usual, I found the vice president most forthcoming and understanding. It is evident that he shares President Bill Clinton's deep commitment to an everlasting and ever-growing friendship with the Egyptian people. We reviewed the steps which have been taken and the progress which has been made since we signed the partnership agreement in September 1994. While we were satisfied with what has been achieved, we agreed on the need to accelerate our joint efforts for our common good. As you well know, Egypt has long had a strong sense of history. With the dawning of a new century, it is only natural that Egypt should equally have an equally strong sense of its future. The Egyptian people are determined to turn a new chapter in their history at this unique crossroads. We have a vision for this future, a vision of a society that moves toward joining the emerging markets nations on solid grounds. Each and every Egyptian citizen is willing to double his and her efforts in order to attain this great leap forward promptly. The Egyptian Government is committed to do all that is required to facilitate this goal.

We have removed many obstacles to investment in the past few years and we are determined to remove all remaining obstacles in the coming few months. We are doing so because we know that this is the best course to take in order to serve the interests of our people. We want to generate new jobs for almost half a million Egyptians every year. We want to offer a better education and more health services to every Egyptian child or youth. That requires the acceleration of economic reform and development. And this will be our goal and pledge.

We are committed to enhancing our exports, both in quantity and quality. Our workers and scientists have proven that they are up to the challenge. The aim is to make the phrase "Made in Egypt" a badge of high quality everywhere. Our greatest resources are our people together with our commitment to properly educating and training the next generation of Egyptians. This happens to be our vision for building a new Egyptian economy, for a new Middle East that is moving towards peace and greater stability. Much has been achieved in the recent past in this domain and much will be done in the months and years ahead. An enhanced regional economy is the key of regional stability and security. To make this vision come true, we will have to mobilize our resources, both human and natural, more than ever before. We will have to optimize the use of our ingenuity and creativity as well, but we need all the help we can get from our trusted friends as we are approaching this great take-off.

The U.S. government, in its administrative and legislative branches, has been quite cooperative and responsive in this regard. The business community can undertake an equally important role. This is the essence of the new partnership. Business representatives from both countries have worked together in the past few months in concert and harmony. We were receptive to certain positive remarks they made, and we are open to any creative ideas and proposals.

On our part, we believe that there is much room for more American investments. The U.S. business circles can be more forthcoming when it comes to technology transfer to Egypt. Other areas for greater cooperation have been identified during our talks this morning, and I am certain that our American partners will do their utmost in order to contribute to the success of our endeavor. We shall be very pleased to work closely with our esteemed friends President Clinton and Vice President Gore during the crucial period ahead. The U.S. is among our favorite friends and partners. We look forward to further cooperation and interaction in various fields. Thank you.

[Gore] Thank you very much Mr. President. Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. President Mubarak and I have just concluded an entire morning of intensive political and economic discussions. I would like to thank my colleagues who traveled with me from the United States and our colleagues on the Egyptian side who have all worked very hard to make this partnership dialogue so successful.

One of the last times that President Mubarak and I met was in September at the White House at the signing of the Israel-Palestinian interim agreement. An enormous amount of change has occurred in this region of the world in the brief period since that signing. And President Clinton and I are grateful for the steadfast and thoughtful leadership of President Mubarak.

Recent events remind us of the risks that men and women of vision take when they fight for peace. Despite these risks, President Mubarak and other regional leaders remain committed to the pursuit of peace and prosperity for the peoples of the Middle East. As our presence here attests, President Mubarak knows that peace

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without prosperity is a hollow legacy to leave our children. Our challenge in bringing peace to the region is in building a new prosperous Middle East with a thriving Egypt leading economically as it has always led politically, with a rising level of income for its citizens. That is why President Mubarak and I have focused our work on ensuring that prosperity and peace would develop hand in hand, both regionally as Cairo prepares to host the Middle East and North Africa Economic Summit later this year and in Egypt itself through our partnership for economic growth and development.

This partnership is a true [word indistinct] between the peoples of Egypt and the United States. This is why we rely so heavily on the sound advice of the President's Council, a body of business leaders who are citizens, not politicians, citizens who care about Egypt and its future and who have taken risks in their professional careers and who are now taking risks to achieve their vision of a dynamic Egypt linked with a dynamic United States. Our meeting with the President's Council of business people has been one of the highlights of my visit to Egypt. They have given us practical suggestions on how to create stronger economic ties between our two countries. I know that President Mubarak has already worked with the Egyptian members of the council in announcing the supreme committee for exports which the president would chair personally. I understand the Council's suggestions for streamlining government procurement policies have already been factored into draft legislation for the new parliament. Other worthwhile policy recommendations aim at accelerating privatization, reducing red tape and authorizing new investments, and establishing an intellectual property protection regime that will allow other risk takers, innovators, and scientists to prosper in Egypt's new economy.

Our task now is to work even more closely together in the coming months and years, both within the partnership and in the Middle East, to forge a greater alliance with all those citizens who reject extremism and who are willing to take [word indistinct] risks for peace and progress and who [words indistinct] will join us in building a new and prosperous Middle East with a new and prosperous Egypt as one of its leaders. Thank you. Salam 'Alaykum.

[Correspondent Afkar al-Karadili from AL-AHRAM] My question is for both President Mubarak and Vice President Gore: What is your evaluation of the American-Egyptian partnership after one year and three meetings of the Presidents' Council, and did you discuss the question of [words indistinct] between Egypt and the United States?

[Gore] You want me to go first? Well, let me respond to the last part of your question first. Our U.S. Congress has been approached by the Administration in our own backyard in the Western hemisphere to get authorization to proceed with a free trade agreement with Chile, the most dynamic and most open market in the Western hemisphere besides our own, and the Congress will not give us authorization to proceed as yet. So, it would be very unrealistic to proceed on the assumption that a free trade agreement would be a near-term prospect because as I say, we cannot even get the authorization to proceed with Chile, and Chile is saying we already have one with Mexico, why don't you treat us like Mexico? But the new Congress is not [pauses] as open to this prospect as previous congresses have been. If it were [words indistinct] government and any nation considered for such an agreement would have to be very open with intellectual property protection and without [word indistinct] trade barriers, and without heavy protections to [word indistinct] its economy. But the first obstacle, as I said, is with our own processes, which are being tested severely in the Western hemisphere.

Now let me respond to the first part of your question. After three meetings of this partnership, one can assess its worth by pointing to the dramatic progress that has been made in the relationship between the United States and Egypt with the changes that are underway and those which are now in immediate prospect. I believe that our two peoples have been able to draw even closer together because of the dialogue, held within the subcommittees of the partnership and within the Presidents' Council, made up of business leaders in Egypt and the United States. I am particularly excited about the 10 months between now and the economic summit that will be held in Cairo in November. I think that it is potentially the most exciting period of market opening, economic reform, and rising living standards that Egypt has ever seen. We stand ready, as members of this partnership, to work closely with our counterparts to maximize the potential for this period of dynamic and dramatic change. I find it very exciting.

[Mubarak] I could add only on what Vice President Gore mentioned, that last year, there were many discussions and meetings with the two sides, the Egyptians and Americans, and so many decisions nearly concluded. So implementation of these remarks will start this year, in few weeks to come, and we hope that this year will be the year of great growth for our economy. Thank you.

[Unidentified correspondent] The American-Egyptian economic relations have been long since before even the partnership has been initiated. In all America's past, American investors were not forthcoming. What are the main reasons blocking this? Are you looking

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into government-to-government cooperation or are you giving the private sector a free hand to work with the Egyptian private sector?

[Gore] We are giving our private sector a free hand to invest as much as they wish to. And I think one of the reasons why you have seen less investments than some other countries have received, not only from the United States but from Europe and East Asia as well, is because many in the rest of the world do not know the Egyptian story of reform and market opening. And the summit in November is an opportunity for Egypt to tell that story to the world. I think a second reason is that during the last 10 to 15 years, the reform movement has quite properly been focused on the task of structural reform and currency stabilization.

And now, in fact, the foundation has been so expertly laid it is possible to move forward with the other forms of change such as privatization and reforms in the regulatory and approval process that has [words indistinct] discussed very ably by President Mubarak on many occasions and by Prime Minister al-Janzuri in outlining the exciting new plans that President Mubarak is [words indistinct]. I think that as a result of this new approach and the opportunity throughout this year culminating with the summit in November, the opportunity that represen's [word indistinct] for the entire world the new realities that investors will be finding here in Egypt and that the president's prediction that 1996 would be an economic breakthrough for Egypt is a prediction that I (?support).

[Name indistinct, United International] President Mubarak has earlier said in his statement that it is necessary to enhance Egyptian-made exports to the United States. How do you [words indistinct]?

[Mubarak] I think this question has been directed to Vice President Al Gore.

[Gore] The Egyptian members of the presidents council have very ably described to us some of the challenges they face in exporting and we have learned a great deal from that about the problems that they face that we should address, and this partnership is very much a two way street. We learn from one another. We assist one another. We work together on the problems that each nation faces. And we give each other homework to do. And I have received some homework as well.

[Suzie al-Junaydi] My question, please, to President Mubarak. The partnership started a year ago and yet it does not seem like it is going forward as it supposed to be. What do you think? We are now hearing about some project in infrastructure in Egypt. Can partnership help Egypt's infrastructure and really effect the Egyptian external debts?

[Mubarak] Ah yes. Look, the last year we [held] discussions between the two parts of the presidential committee. They are much more experienced in the private sector and recognize what problems face them in starting to build factories here and what steps we should remove without affecting the budget in this country. From their experience to [word indistinct] the discussions and the meetings they made in four subcommittees, we came to a conclusion that we should move forward, we should make some steps in the very near future to help the progress in that field. For the infrastructure, we agreed on some issues which will be declared soon by the government about electricity and highways by the private sectors and other things which will not make an overload for the Egyptian citizen.

[Gore] May I also add that I would encourage you to look at the very strong results of the work of the subcommittees, with the agreements and progress made in the area of health care, and education, and environment, and sustainable development [word indistinct] as economic progress and science and technology, the rich exchanges between our two nations on science and technology. These agreements that have been reached are bearing fruit along with the work of the presidents' council. It all adds up to a closer relationship and a rapid economic progress here in Egypt.

[Mubarak] Thank you very much.

[Gore] Thank you.

Gore Meets Prime Minister al-Janzuri

NC1501163496 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1512 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Jan (MENA) — Prime Minister Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri received U.S. Vice President Al Gore and his accompanying delegation in his office today. During the meeting, they reviewed bilateral cooperation between Egypt and the United States within the framework of the Egyptian-U.S. partnership agreement and in light of President Mubarak's talks with the U.S. guest earlier today. President Mubarak and Al Gore discussed ways of strengthening cooperation and coordination between the two countries in all spheres, increasing U.S. investments and encouraging the role of the private sector in development, and promoting technical cooperation and introducing modern U.S. technology into Egypt.

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Ministry Source Views Ties With U.S.

NC1501134496 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1255 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Jan (MENA) — An official Foreign Ministry source has described U.S. Vice President Al Gore's visit to Cairo as clearly expressing U.S. interest in expediting the implementation of the cooperation programs contained in the Mubarak-Gore economic partnership initiative, which was approved in 1994.

In a statement today, the source said the committees of the Egyptian-American Presidential Council prepared proposals to present to President Mubarak and Gore.

The source said the proposals revolve around three issues: The first views the future of bilateral economic relations, the second discusses the role of American-Egyptian partnership in supporting Egypt's economic reforms, and the third offers an integrated vision of how Egypt can score positive achievements that will help it attract foreign investment.

The source said steps are expected to be made to help the private sector in both countries participate in infrastructure activities in Egypt.

The participation of the Egyptian private sector in such activity is a major and important turning point for Egyptian economic policy, the source said.

The source pointed out that the joint presidential council has specified the areas of Egyptian-U.S. cooperation in the implementation of three programs consisting of 30 projects costing $150 million. The public sectors in Egypt and the United States will implement the projects and private societies will participate in their implementation to promote the mechanisms of developing private cooperation.

The source stressed that partnership between Egypt and the United States seeks to advance economic growth, create job opportunities, promote the role of the private sector, and support economic reforms. This adds to the contributions of U.S. Aid programs in Egypt and makes Egyptian-U.S. economic relations reciprocal in nature.

Ambassador in U.S. Views Visit, Ties

NC1501093996 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0612 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Jan (MENA) — Egypt's Ambassador in Washington Ahmad Mahir has emphasized that the meeting to be held in Cairo today between Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and U.S. Vice President Al Gore is a true beginning to the implementation of the bilateral cooperation that is part of the Mubarak-Gore Initiative.

He remarked that Gore's visit to Egypt takes place following meetings last year, qualifying the Egyptian-U.S. partnership to represent an important step toward achieving the initiative.

In an interview with AL-AHRAM today, Ambassador Mahir said the governmental committees tasked with examining economic cooperation, education, technology, and human development arranged ministerial meetings last year between the Egyptian and U.S. sides. Along with the meetings of the Businessmen's Committee, they can now make proposals to Mubarak and the U.S. vice president on a working plan to implement the basic aspects of the Mubarak-Gore Initiative. These aspects, he added, include the increasing of U.S. capital in the development process in Egypt through joint or U.S. projects to help Egypt benefit from U.S. technology more effectively and in a more organized way.

The ambassador said Gore insisted on visiting Egypt on schedule despite U.S. budget problems, after rumors that the visit might be postponed; this way he would be asserting his personal interest in the Egyptian-U.S. relationship. He added that Egypt is one of U.S. foreign policy's three files on which Gore is focusing; the others are the Russian and South African files. This personal interest encourages U.S. Administration agencies to contribute positively to implementing the Mubarak-Gore Initiative, he noted.

In his interview with AL-AHRAM, the Egyptian ambassador in Washington clarified that Gore's visit to Egypt has a political dimension. The visit, he added, will deal with ties between Egypt and the United States, the Middle East peace process, the important role played by the two countries in this direction, and the two countries' contribution to peacekeeping operations in Bosnia. He noted that there is a new topic concerning the coordination of stances, with Egypt becoming a member of the Security Council.

The Egyptian ambassador said Gore's visit to Cairo today will provide an opportunity for intense talks spanning the whole day.

The ambassador was asked about the new ties between Egypt and the United States, with Egypt's role shifting from simply being an aid recipient to a country involved in an exchange with another. He replied that it is important for both Egypt and the United States to move toward deeper and more extensive cooperation. He added that this is not because the aid will end one day, "although it will not end soon," but because the Egyptian economy has achieved progress and is

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qualified to enter a new kind of relationship with the United States by opening up broader horizons in line with Egyptian goals and interests.

Therefore, and because the United States realizes this fact, he remarked, President Clinton and Vice President Gore proposed this new relationship. Egypt, he said, accepted and welcomed this relationship and President Mubarak was personally interested in seeing it become a successful experiment in developing the ties between the two friendly countries. Commenting on Egypt's role in the Middle East, Ambassador Mahir said Egypt has an independent role, not associated with the United states, but linked with Egypt's role as an Arab country with pan-Arab commitments that it has never abandoned.

Gore Departs

NC1501160596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1535 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Jan (MENA) — U.S. Vice President Al Gore left Cairo this afternoon after a one-day visit to Cairo. During his visit, he met with President Husni Mubarak and a number of senior Egyptian officials. He was seen off at the airport by Minister of Electricity and Energy Dr. Mahir Abazah.

Libya

China's Foreign Minister Qian Qichen Pays Visit

Arrives in Tripoli

LD1201100996 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 0920 GMT 12 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Tripoli, 12 Jan — Qian Qichen, vice premier and foreign minister in the [People's] Republic of China, arrived last night in Tripoli on a visit to the Great Jamahiriyah. [passage omitted]

Qian Qichen gave a statement to JANA in which he stressed the depth of the existing relations of friendship and cooperation between the Great Jamahiriyah and China. He said that this visit comes as an expression of our solidarity and standing with the Great Jamahiriyah in confronting the unjust sanctions imposed on it.

Meets With al-Qadhdhafi

LD1201220996 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 12 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The brother leader of the revolution [al-Qadhdhafi] today received Mr. Qian Qichen, Chinese vice premier and foreign minister, and the delegation accompanying him, who are visiting the Great Jamahiriyah.

During this meeting, Mr. Qian Qichen conveyed the greetings of the Chinese leadership and people to the brother leader of the revolution and the Libyan people. He stressed China's support for the Great Jamahiriyah in the crisis between it and the Western states, and its rejection of the unjust measures imposed on the Great Jamahiriyah. He said that his country is seeking the lifting of these unjust measures.

During this meeting, the brother leader of the revolution underlined the historic cohesion between the Arab-Islamic civilization and the Confucius-based civilization in facing up to the aggressive Western civilization which seeks to dominate the world under American leadership, and he stressed China's international role in confronting these challenges. The brother leader of the revolution charged Mr. Qian Qichen to convey his greetings and those of the Arab Libyan people to the Chinese leadership and people, and he stressed the importance of strengthening and promoting bilateral relations between the Great Jamahiriyah and China. [passage omitted]

Concludes Visit, Departs

LD1301165096 Tripoli Great Jamahiriyah Radio Network in Arabic 1330 GMT 13 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The brother secretary of the General People's Congress met with Qian Qichen, PRC vice premier and foreign minister, and the delegation accompanying him in Tripoli this morning.

During the meeting, the General People's Congress secretary briefed the Chinese delegation about the direct people's democracy implemented in the Great Jamahiriyah through the decision-making people's congresses and through the people's committees which execute the decisions of the masses. [passage omitted]

The director of the Asian Department of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation and the Chinese ambassador to the Great Jamahiriyah held a meeting and discussed prospects of bilateral cooperation between the secretariat of the General People's Congress and the Chinese National People's Congress.

The brother secretary of the General People's Committee met with Qian Qichen this morning. During the meeting, which was attended by the secretary of the People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation, views were exchanged on various issues of common interest. During the meeting the Chinese minister affirmed China's rejection of the unjust measures imposed on the Great Jamahiriyah, stressing that the Great Jamahiriyah has gained the support of all regional and international organizations in its crisis with

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the Western states. He also stated that China will continue to exert efforts to lift the unjust measures imposed on the Great Jamahiriyah.

Qian Qichen left Tripoli this afternoon, ending his visit to the Great Jamahiriyah. [passage omitted]

Official Discusses Chechnya With Russian Envoy

LD1001181896 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1705 GMT 10 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tripoli, 10 Jan — The brother secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation met the charge d'affaires of the Russian Federation's embassy in the Great Jamahiriyah.

This meeting falls within the framework of the contacts which the Great Jamahiriyah was holding with the Russian Federation and Chechnya to find a compromise solution and stop the hemorrhage and hostility between the Muslims of Chechnya and the Russian Federation.

Sudan

Ethiopian Army Attacks on Border Reported

Army Reports 'Frequent' Attacks

EA1301153096 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 13 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The General Command of the People's Armed Forces issued a statement yesterday evening saying that the Ethiopian forces have carried out frequent attacks on Sudanese borders. The statement said that the Ethiopian forces mounted a criminal attack against the Baslan border area in Qadarif State on 27 December. The attack was accompanied by intensive artillery bombardment of the (Lakadi) area, and on 28 December the Ethiopian forces carried out another attack on the border area of (Hamarayat al-Rahad) in large numbers and occupied it. The border guards bravely resisted them, and inflicted great losses on them. Then on 1 January, the Ethiopian forces attacked the (al-Allaw) border point and occupied it.

Up till that date the government had tried to contain the situation by peaceful and diplomatic means. Contact was established with the Ethiopian side to get it to commit itself to the bilateral agreements concluded between the two countries which stipulate the stationing of both sides' forces at their former positions, and the maintainance of a demilitarized zone on the common borders.

However, in spite of this, it has become clear that the Ethiopian Government wants to continue its premeditated hostile policies. It renewed its aggression on 11 January. The Ethiopian forces attacked the (Taya) area inside Sudanese territory and occupied it. Our Armed Forces engaged them in battle, inflicted losses on them, and destroyed two of their tanks.

It is noticeable that all these acts of aggression are characterized by the use of large numbers of Ethiopian forces supported by intensive artillery in addition to the use of armored vehicles and tanks. The attacks are premeditated, indicating forward planning, and the intention to commit aggression. This confirms the Ethiopian Armed Forces' involvement in planning to harm the country's integrity and regional stability.

The General Command confirmed that the Armed Forces and the People's Defense Forces will use the required force to deter and resist any aggression on the country's borders without ceding one inch of the homeland's territory.

Government Protests to UN

EA1301174296 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 13 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sudan has lodged a complaint with the UN Security Council in which it calls for taking necessary measures to end the Ethiopian acts of aggression against Sudanese territory, and to normalize the situation.

This was announced by Foreign Minister 'Ali 'Uthman Muhammad Taha at a news conference he held at the Foreign Ministry this afternoon. He emphasized that Sudan began diplomatic contacts and sent a clear letter of protest to the Ethiopian president in which it demanded an end to the Ethiopian occupation of Sudanese territory. Sudan also called on the Ethiopian side to respect the border conventions concluded between the two countries.

The foreign minister dealt with latest developments on the eastern front along the borders. He refered, in this regard, to the General Command's statement on those incidents. He said: The Sudanese Government's behavior has always been that of self-restraint, but the 11 January attack will remain a danger signal in so far as the Ethiopian acts of aggression against Sudan are concerned.

The foreign minister confirmed that the government has taken all precautions to defend the homeland. The foreign minister asked the Ethiopian Government to withdraw its forces, and to stop its aggression against Sudanese territory. He said: The aggression was planned and implemented by the Ethiopian Government, with Ethiopian weapons and Ethiopian soldiers. He pointed out that Sudan has made several contacts with brothers

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and friends in the Arab, African, and international arenas. Those states expressed their understanding of the Sudanese point of view. The foreign minister noted Russia's understanding of the conflict in the area.

Al-Bashir Briefs Cabinet on 'Aggression'

EA1401175396 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Staff Lieutenant General 'Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir, president of the Republic, chaired the regular session of the Council of Ministers today. His Excellency the president briefed the council on the latest situation along the Sudanese-Ethiopian border, and on Ethiopian aggression against Sudan. Lt. Gen. al-Bashir stressed that the government has taken all the necessary measures to contain the situation along our eastern border areas. [passage omitted]

Al-Bashir on Moves To Contain Crisis

EA1401172796 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Lieutenant General 'Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir, the president of the Republic, says Ethiopia has responded to foreign pressure by continuing its hostility toward Sudan which began after the attempted assassination of Egyptian President Husni Mubarak. He pointed out that there are moves from the Sudanese and Ethiopian sides to contain the crisis.

In an interview with the newspaper AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, al-Bashir also touched on the current situation in Sudan. In Doka Town, al-Qadarif State, Major General al-Zubayr Muhammad Salih, the first vice president of the Republic, said Sudan will not cede an inch of its territory, and will respond in equal measure against anyone committing aggression against Sudan's sacred territory. [passage omitted]

Officials Tour Border Areas

EA1401202396 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Major General al-Zubayr Muhammad Salih, the first vice president of the Republic, accompanied by the minister of defense, General Hassan 'Abd-al-Rahman, has continued his inspection tour of al-Qadarif State to acquaint himself with the security situation in the state, particularly in the border areas.

This morning, His Excellency visited al-Fashala Governorate where he addressed the mujahidin battalions at Wad al-Hulw. He expressed satisfaction with the high morale prevailing in the ranks of the mujahidin in the state. Al-Zubayr urged that this spirit be maintained in order to face up to the conspiracies being hatched against the homeland and its territorial integrity. He called for more work to deepen the spirit of faith. He said that Sudan is quite capable of confronting challenges, and resisting all forms of plotting.

Meanwhile, Maj. Gen. al-Zubayr denied all the lies and allegations according to which Sudan is striving to impose Islam on its neighbors by force. In a speech to the political and people's leadership in al-Qadarif State, he said Sudan is one of the countries of the world which highly respects the sovereignty of nations, and which does seek to interfere in the affairs of others. He said everything being said about Sudan in this regard is no more than a manifestation of hostility toward Sudan's civilizational orientation.

General Mobilization Declared

EA1401205096 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in English 1800 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Government of al-Qadarif State has issued a statement condemning the Ethiopian aggression on Sudanese eastern border, stating that the aggression was a flagrant violation of the agreement concluded between the State of al-Qadarif and the Ethiopian Government.

The statement explained that general mobilization has been declared at al—Qadarif State and an emergency office has been set up for monitoring the Ethiopian movements. The state's government has called upon all citizens to provide food support for the mujahidin of the Armed Forces and the People's Defense Forces, and to join the jihad battalions to confront the aggression on the Sudanese lands. The statement also hailed the vital role of the Armed Forces and People's Defense Forces in defense of faith and the homeland.

Defense Official Briefs Assembly

EA1501220896 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Staff Major General Muhammad 'Abdallah Uwaydah, chairman of the security and defense committee in the Transitional National Assembly [TNA], briefed today's session chaired by TNA Speaker Muhammad al-Amin Khalifah about the Ethiopian attack on the country's eastern border.

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In his briefing, His Excellency stressed that the Armed Forces, the People's Defense Forces, and other regular forces are capable of repelling the aggression, and of defeating it thereby protecting every inch of the homeland. Maj. Gen. Uwaydah said the Ethiopian aggression is part of a series of conspiracies being hatched against Sudan and its cultural course.

The assembly members requested the defense minister to prepare a statement. They also requested the foreign minister to issue a statement about the diplomatic efforts undertaken in this context.

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Kuwait

Iranian Foreign Minister Arrives on 2-Day Visit

Hails Relations

LD1501182596 Kuwait KSC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati arrived in Kuwait today on a two-day official visit, during which he will hold talks on a number of bilateral and regional issues.

He was welcomed on arrival by Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, the first deputy prime minister and foreign minister.

The Iranian minister made a statement on his arrival in which he said he was carrying a message from Iranian President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani to his highness the amir. In his statement Velayati hailed the relations between the two countries.

Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad, for his part, expressed his welcome to the Iranian foreign minister.

Meets Counterpart, Stresses Friendly Ties

LD1501214996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2030 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] During his first round of talks with our country's foreign minister, the foreign minister of Kuwait termed the relations between Kuwait and the Islamic Republic of Iran as very good, and stressed the importance of regional cooperation between the two countries.

Shaykh Sabah described the exchange of political and economic delegations at various levels as a sign of strong relations and his country's desire to expand cooperation with Iran.

According to a report of the Central News Unit, developments and regional cooperation were also discussed at this meeting. The two sides stated their common viewpoints on the necessity of maintaining goodneighborliness and cooperation in the sensitive region of the Persian Gulf.

Referring to elements which are trying to create discord among the nations of the region, the Kuwait foreign minister stressed the need for cooperation in order to safeguard the region from sedition.

Mr. Velayati for his part, referring to the two countries' desire to expand ties, described Kuwait as a neighboring country which shares important common features with Iran and one which can enjoy active and extensive ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran in various fields.

Our country's foreign minister said that it is significant for the two countries to enjoy understanding and mutual respect. He described as positive the two countries' efforts to strengthen and expand cooperation in bilateral and regional spheres.

During a news conference, the two countries' foreign ministers described Iran-Kuwait ties as friendly. The Kuwait foreign minister stressed that relations between Kuwait and the Islamic Republic of Iran are very friendly and sincere.

Comments on Border, POW Issue

LD1601115296 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1000 GMT 16 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati has praised Kuwaiti-Iranian relations.

At a news conference held today on the occasion of his visit to Kuwait, he said that relations between Kuwait and Iran had become stronger, particularly in the last two years, stressing that they were continually developing for the better.

The Iranian foreign minister said that the strengthening of relations between Kuwait and Iran would lead to the advancement of the positive and constructive relations between Iran and the other Gulf Cooperation Council states.

'Ali Akbar Velayati stressed that there were no border problems between Kuwait and Iran regarding the marking of the continental shelf, pointing out that it was being carried out amicably.

Velayati said that Iran was making every possible effort to secure the release of Kuwaiti POWs held in Iraq.

Delivers Rafsanjani Message to Amir

LD1601114096 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1000 GMT 16 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] At 0930 today his highness the amir of the country received Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati, foreign minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the accompanying delegation. He delivered a message to his highness, God preserve him, from the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, His Excellency President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani. [passage omitted]

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French Defense Minister Million Arrives for Visit

Views Goal of Visit

LD1401172496 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1621 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait, 14 Jan — French Defense Minister Charles Millon arrived here today on a visit to Kuwait. He was greeted upon arrival by the Kuwaiti Defense Minister Shaykh Ahmad al-Hamud al-Sabah, General 'Ali al-Mu'min, the chief of the general staff, the defense ministry's undersecretary and a number of officials.

It is expected that the French defense minister will be having talks with the Kuwaiti officials on the two countries' cooperation, particularly in the military fields.

Millon had told KUNA in Paris that his country was interested in Kuwait's security and the stability in the Gulf region and hoped that his visit would bolster the two countries' relations.

Millon said: "My visit will be another opportunity to reaffirm France's interest in the stability of the Gulf region and the security of Kuwait and to re-evaluate our cooperation in the defense spheres, particularly in the arms deals in which France is a partner."

Kuwait has had a military defense agreement with France since 1992.

Holds News Conference

LD1501181096 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1700 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] French Defense Minister Charles Millon has called on Iraq to implement the UN resolutions related to its aggression on the State of Kuwait.

That was said at a news conference held by the French defense minister this afternoon at the end of his two-day visit to the country.

The French defense minister said that his country would have nothing to do with Iraq, unless it abided by all the UN resolutions, led by resolving the issue of Kuwaiti POWs and revealing its mass-destruction weapons.

The French defense minister praised the cooperation between his country and Kuwait in all spheres. He said that he felt that the two countries' views were identical regarding many issues, such as peace in the Middle East and the Bosnian problem.

The French minister added that his talks with Defense Minister Shaykh Ahmad al-Hamud al-Sabah dealt with issues of defense cooperation between the two countries.

The French defense minister earlier today met Shaykh Sabah al- Ahmad, first deputy prime minister and foreign minister.

Holds Talks, Leaves

LD1501192096 Kuwait KSC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwaiti Defense Minister Shaykh Ahmad al- Hamud al-Jabir al-Sabah and French Defense Minister Charles Millon held talks today on ways of strengthening and developing bilateral relations between the two countries.

During the meeting, the French minister reaffirmed his country's commitment to Kuwait by supplying it with the best French military equipment and technology.

The two sides also discussed ways of developing military cooperation in the spheres of joint military exercises and training between the Kuwaiti and French armies.

Millon called on Iraq to implement the UN resolutions concerning the liberation of Kuwait, particularly those pertaining the release of Kuwaitis held in Iraq.

That was said at a news conference held by the French minister this afternoon. The French defence minister said that the reason behind the visit of a French parliamentary delegation, led by a former foreign minister, to Baghdad this week was to reaffirm and repeat the French stance, and that there was no other aim behind the visit.

Millon added that his talks with Kuwaiti officials dealt with defense and bilateral issues.

Millon added that the talks dealt with three main points, the first concerned the exchange of military training between France and Kuwait, the second concerned holding joint exercises, and the third concerned military equipment.

He said that he had held political talks during his visit, which included the situation in Iraq and Bosnia, the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute, balance in the Middle East and other issues of mutual concern.

The French minister expressed his complete satisfaction with the results of the talks.

Million left Kuwait this afternoon. He was seen off by the Kuwaiti defense minister.

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Saudi Arabia

Crown Prince Says King Fahd's Health 'Improving'

NC1301145496 Paris AFP in English 1423 GMT 13 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riyadh, Jan 13 (AFP) — King Fahd of Saudi Arabia is recovering from the illness that has prevented him working in the past few weeks, the country's acting leader, Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, said Saturday [13 January].

Crown Prince 'Abdallah told members of the national consultative council: "I want to assure you that, thanks to God, the king's health is constantly improving."

The crown prince, 72, who was attending for the first time the opening of a new session of the council, set up in 1993, was asked by the king to take control of the affairs of state on January 1 until he recovered.

The king was in hospital from November 29 to December 7, suffering from the effects of overwork, according to officials. Doctors and diplomats, however, said he had suffered a blood clot on the brain.

Crown Prince 'Abdallah, the king's half brother, urged the council to "take inspiration" from King Fahd's directives on domestic and foreign policy.

Crown Prince Receives 'Arafat, Views Christopher Talks

LD1401134796 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Television Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His royal highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-Aziz, the crown prince, deputy prime minister and commander of the National Guard, received in his office at the royal court at al-Yamama Palace today His Excellency Yasir 'Arafat, the Palestinian president and head of the state of Palestine, and the delegation accompanying him.

The audience was attended by his royal highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, the foreign minister; 'Abd-al-Muhsin Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Tuwayjiri, the adviser in Crown Prince 'Abdallah's office; and Mustafa Hashim Shaykh, the charge d'affaires at the Palestinian Embassy in the Kingdom.

His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat, head of the state of Palestine, expressed his thanks to King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the custodian of the two holy mosques, and his royal highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the crown prince, deputy prime minister and commander of the National Guard, for their support for the Palestinian National Authority. In a press statement he made on his arrival in Riyadh today, he said that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was playing an important, brotherly, positive, and clear role toward its brothers in the National Authority and the Palestinian people.

His excellency added that his visit was aimed, first, at enquiring about the health of King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques, and also holding talks with his royal highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the crown prince, deputy prime minister, and commander of the National Guard; and his royal highness Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, second deputy prime minister, minister of defense and aviation and inspector general, on the peace moves and the Palestinian elections.

The Palestinian leader also expressed his optimism about the development of Arab relations and said that there had to be a strong and solid Arab solidarity to enable the Arab nation to face up to the new world order united and with a solidary and homogeneous position. On the outcome of his talks with Warren Christopher, U.S. secretary of state, his excellency said that they had discussed a number of points pertaining to the elections and some problems in Hebron and Jerusalem. He added that he had asked him to intervene in his role as a sponsor of the peace process and also to obtain the release of the detainees. He added that he had examined with Christopher the rest of the peace process and the results achieved at the meeting of donors held in Paris and the importance of implementing what had been agreed.

The Palestinian president said that the preparations for the Palestinian elections were going well and that the voting would start in six days.

President Yasir 'Arafat had arrived in Riyadh earlier today on a visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He was greeted at King Khalid International Airport by his royal highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, the foreign minister; Mustafa Shaykh, the Palestinian charge d'affaires; the staff of the Palestinian embassy; a representative of Royal Protocol; and a number of civilian and military officials.

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BABIL Reports al-Qadhdhafi's Anti-Jordan Remarks

Cites al-Qadhdhafi on 'Right to Attack'

JN1601105496 Baghdad BABIL in Arabic 26 Dec 95 p 2

[Report published under the caption: "According to Foreign News Agencies"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tripoli, 25 December — Libyan leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi called on Iraqis Sunday [24 December] to attack Jordan to protest the initiatives of Jordan's King Husayn regarding the future of Iraq.

Al-Qadhdhafi strongly attacked the Jordanian king's proposals and called on the Iraqi people to attack the dens of treason and conspiracy, according to Libyan TV.

In a speech on the anniversary of a battle waged against the Italian occupation in Libya in 1916, al-Qadhdhafi announced that the Iraqi people have the right to attack and fight Jordan.

Col. al-Qadhdhafi said: King Husayn seeks to divide Iraq. Al-Qadhdhafi termed this an encroachment on 20 million Iraqis and the beginning of the balkanization of the Arab world.

He said: We support and encourage the Iraqi people, who will not suffer more than what they have already suffered.

Notes Newspapers' Coverage of Remarks

JN1601090396 Baghdad BABIL in Arabic 13 Jan 96 p 2

[Report published under the caption: "According to Foreign News Agencies"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad — Iraqi newspapers published Thursday [11 January] highlighted Libyan leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi's criticism of Jordan, which he accused of working to divide Iraq. The Iraqi newspapers published on their front pages under big banners without comment the statement by Col. al-Qadhdhafi on 24 December, in which he called for taking up arms and attacking Jordan to protest the initiatives of Jordan's King Husayn regarding the future of Iraq.

In a speech on the anniversary of a battle waged by Libyans against the Italian invaders in 1916, Col. al-Qadhdhafi called on the Iraqi people to bypass the [Iraqi] army and government and attack the plotters.

King Husayn, who was the ally of Baghdad during the 30-state aggression, stepped up his call urging Iraqi renegades to set up a federation as a possible alternative.

Iraqi newspapers published the Libyan leader's statements three days after Iraqi Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf urged Jordan not to interfere in internal Iraqi affairs.

PUK Reports Regime's Military Moves on Jordanian Border

NC1301161896 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1500 GMT 13 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The weekly newspaper AL-ITTIHAD, mouthpiece of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK], reports today that the despotic regime is currently busy carrying out military operations on its border with Jordan [anna al-nizam al-diktaturi munhamik haliyan fi ijra' al-'amaliyat al-'askariyah 'ala al-hudud ma' al-urdun]. The newspaper's sources say that the commander of an armored corps academy in Tikrit declared, in the course of a lecture he was making, that a U.S. conspiracy is being hatched in Jordan against Iraq and that a group of Jordanians and Iraqis are involved in it.

AL-ITTIHAD points out that some Iraqi military units deployed on the Jordanian and Kuwaiti borders are expected to carry out military operations on these borders.

These actions by the regime come in the wake of a plan proposed by Jordan to end the Iraqi people's tragic sufferings.

Foreign Minister Reacts to U.S. Envoy's Remarks

JN1201190796 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 12 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Reacting to statements made by Madeleine Albright, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, on Thursday, 11 January 1996, Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf made the following remarks to the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY:

Once again, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations repeats her contradictory positions, which are now being strongly criticized all over the world. She alleged that Iraq threatens the region's security. She also alleged that the United States is more concerned about the human conditions in Iraq than the Iraqis themselves and their leader, President Saddam Husayn. We do not believe there are any statements that can be filled with more falsehoods than those made by the U.S.

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ambassador. The U.S. political and military hegemony over the Arabian Gulf region which runs counter to the people's aspirations and hopes is the threat against the security of the region and Iraq. The illegitimate and illegal imposition of no-fly zones in northern and southern Iraq is a direct threat against the security of Iraq, the Arabian Gulf region, and the southern part of Turkey. The presence of U.S. fleets in the waters of the Arabian Gulf and the Red Sea is also a direct threat to the security of Arab states, including Iraq.

The foreign minister added: The U.S. ambassador's allegation that her government is more concerned about the human conditions in Iraq than the Iraqis and their leader, President Saddam Husayn, is a pathetic allegation and a bad joke that confirms the schizophrenic nature of U.S. policy. Iraq has objectively dealt with all the initiatives proposed by UN Security Council member states, and by other states, to address the human suffering produced by the unjust embargo imposed against our country in order to end that unjust embargo. Iraq clearly and precisely focused on the practical steps which the UN Security Council can take quickly and easily in that regard.

The foreign minister said: These steps include allowing Iraq to use its frozen funds, estimated at $4 billion, to purchase food, medicine, and other civilian basic needs. These funds are frozen in banks in certain Arab and foreign states. The greater part of the Iraqi funds are frozen in U.S. banks, and they are estimated at $3 billion. There are also other funds in the banks of Britain, France, Italy, and other countries. There are also funds in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and other Arab states. U.S. ambassador Madeleine Albright does not like this request, because her government is freezing Iraqi funds and wants to inflict harm on Iraq. Allowing Iraq to use its frozen funds now will deprive Washington of the opportunity to inflict further harm on the Iraqi people.

The foreign minister added: Iraq also proposed an end to the U.S. pressure on the Sanctions Committee and demanded the implementation of a proposal by the Nonaligned Group to ease the Committee's working procedures so that the Committee can respond to the requests to supply the basic civilian commodities, which Iraq needs. The U.S. representative opposed the Nonaligned Group proposal. The motive for this U.S. position is clear — to inflict further harm on Iraq and the Iraqi people.

Al-Sahhaf added: The third proposal made by Iraq is to address the intransigent positions and the illegal and illegitimate interpretations made by the U.S. representatives at the UN Security Council which hamper any proposal or initiative made by the other Security Council members.

The foreign minister said: Despite all that, the U.S. ambassador alleges that her government is concerned about the Iraqi people's suffering. Are there any statements that are more ridicules and contradictory than those of the U.S. ambassador?

The foreign minister said: The U.S. ambassador's statements on Iraq's dealing with the Special Commission, headed by Rolf Ekeus, included unfounded political interpretations. They reflect the United States' insistence to impose its political positions and objectives on the Special Commission. Therefore, we draw the attention of the other Security Council members to this point. We also demand that the said committee should not be used for objectives that are unrelated to its mandate, as stipulated in Section C of Resolution 687. We further demand compliance with the legal interpretation of Resolution 687. We stress here that Iraq has implemented all the substantive objectives sought by Resolution 687, and that the U.S. positions and statements that claim otherwise are prejudiced and aim at extorting others and at pushing them to take positions that are unrelated to the UN Security Council resolutions.

The foreign minister concluded by saying: Albright's statements are full of contradictions, which no one can believe. They reflect the United States' growing feeling of agony because states, from inside and outside the UN Security Council, have now became active again in demanding an end to the human suffering which Iraq has been facing for more than five years now, and an end to the unjust embargo imposed against it. Away from the U.S. allegations, we underline what Leader President Saddam Husayn said in his important speech on the 75th anniversary of the valiant Iraqi Army on 6 January; that Iraq will continue to cooperate objectively and legally with the UN Security Council and the Special Commission to lift the unjust embargo imposed on it as soon as possible.

Saddam: U.S. To Blame for Sentences Against Citizens

JN1501120396 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1130 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 15 Jan (INA) — President Saddam Husayn emphasized the need to support and care for Iraqi scientists and researchers so they can conduct creative research on increasing food production, especially grain, as well as medicine, to confront the unjust blockade.

The president made the remarks while chairing the third session of the Council of Ministers of 1996. During

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a debate of scientific research, the president added: Creating several spheres and centers for competitive research and not confining this to one channel would promote creativity in all areas.

During the Council of Minister's debate of amending some laws, the president spoke about one aspect of the crimes of the unjust 30-state aggression against the people of Iraq. The president said the aggression states, led by the United States, are to blame for the execution or imprisonment, by law, of any person for the crimes this person committed in the wake of the 30-state aggression. The enemies were not satisfied with their crime, which is targeted against the values of Iraqis. Therefore, they sought to rob the entire homeland through tendentious proposals which the Iraqi people faced with their awareness on the Great March Day.

The Council of Ministers debated issues on the agenda and adopted proper decisions.

Paper Sees U.S. 'Motives' for Continuing Sanctions

NC1301104896 Baghdad INA in Arabic
0907 GMT 13 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 13 Jan (INA)—An Iraqi newspaper has stressed that Iraq is observing the substantive obligations concerning banned weapons and that the clamor being made now about the documents handed over to the special commission is intentional and has clear objectives, considering that these documents were mere researches and studies.

AL-JUMHURIYAH says in an article published today that Iraq does not at present possess any banned weapons or components for such weapons, yet the United States is making all this fuss with the aim of dashing hopes of implementing Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687.

It stresses that the arbitrary U.S. stand vis-a-vis Iraq does not stem from a desire to implement the Security Council resolutions but from a desire for oil and for imperialist and political reasons. It notes that keeping Iraq besieged for a long time would allow the United States to steal more of the region's oil and to sap the will of regional regimes politically and economically. It adds that what has happened to Iraq is the result of its rejection of the U.S. hegemonistic policy as well as its refusal to put its people's oil wealth at the mercy of the United States. It stresses that the United States will yield to the determination and firmness of the Iraqi people, who have recorded the most brilliant images of steadfastness and have made great sacrifices for the sake of protecting their dignity, wealth, and independence.

The paper recalls the U.S. motives and vile objectives, which are used as a pretext for defending U.S. interests and national security. It says that these motives and objectives can be summed up as controlling Arab oil, ensuring its flow at prices it wants, imposing total hegemony on the region, intensifying the U.S. presence on the pretext of ensuring the flow of oil, and imposing a humiliating peace on the Arabs that serves the U.S. strategic aim— ensuring the security, existence, and military and economic superiority of the Zionist entity.

The paper concludes by saying that the U.S. national security strategy of expansion and intervention which was declared last July exposes the new imperialist propensity of the United States in the post cold-war era [words indistinct] in any region where U.S. interests are endangered.

Paper Comments on U.S. Relationship With Iran

JN0501135696 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic
21 Dec 95 p 3

["Sidelines" column by Sabri Hammadi: "Mutual Concern"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The newspaper LOS ANGELES TIMES has not revealed any new development or surprise — at least as far as we are concerned — when it says the Clinton administration is concerned about the lines of relationship with Tehran and that it is sensitive to any move that could lead to tension or estrangement with the rulers of Iran.

Indeed, there is nothing new in this report. The Clinton administration, which is determined to follow the same foreign policy line pursued by the administration of war criminal Bush, has inherited among other things this Iranian relationship; an old relationship that began with the downfall of the Shah, and which was later strengthened under the Reagan administration and the regime of the mullahs until it reached its peak in the deal for the release of the American Embassy hostages in Tehran.

During the Irangate scandal, whose godfather and key star was the notorious Bush, this relationship became even stronger and more intricate. Then, former UN Secretary General de Cuellar came on the scene and played his role of further cementing this relationship by arranging the deal for the release of several American hostages in Lebanon in return for a report on the Iraq-Iran War which he packed with lies and scandalous fallacies.

Of course, all these deals and scandals had taken place under a heavy media cover. Tehran radio and newspapers did not cease for a single day then leveling

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their curses and insults at the forces of world arrogance and the arch-Satan!

Therefore, it is no secret that the so-called U.S. policy of dual containment toward Iraq and Iran is careful to make a distinction between them: there should be no estrangement with Iran, the door should be kept open for dialogue with its rulers, and the prospect of normalizing relations should continue to exist.

Tehran, which is facing numerous and varied internal and external pressures these days, seems to be more concerned than Washington about maintaining and developing this relationship. It is sufficient that Rafsanjani has clearly announced earlier that Iran's doors are open before the United States in all fields. This is in addition to the fact that he has offered his regime's services to the U.S. Administration on more than one occasion. Certainly, we have not forgotten that they have used that regime twice in the aggression against our people and country.

Foreign Ministry Reacts to Iranian 'Claims'

JN1501130696 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 15 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Iranian General Mir Faysal Baqir Zadah [name as transliterated], official in charge of the teams searching for the bodies and remains of Iranians, made a statement to the IRANIAN NEWS AGENCY on 13 January 1996. The Iranian official said the remains of a large number of Iranian troops, who were killed during the Iraq-Iran war, were found. This is in addition to finding the remains of several of our righteous martyrs. The Iranian official claimed that Iraq has not cooperated with Iran in this regard.

Commenting on this, an Iraqi Foreign Ministry spokesman made the following statement to the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY on 15 January 1996:

First, Gen. Mir Baqir Zadah, on behalf of his government, signed with Iraq the minutes of the meeting of the joint committee searching for the remains of war victims. This took place when an Iraqi delegation visited Tehran on 14 September 1995. Based on those minutes, the Iraqi and Iranian sides held a meeting on the Iraqi-Iranian border at the Khosravi post on 8 October 1995. During this meeting, information was exchanged on the remains of war victims which were found in order to take the appropriate measures for an exchange of those remains by both sides.

The Iraqi and Iranian sides held another joint meeting on the Iraqi-Iranian border at the al-Mundhiriyah post on 17 October 1995. During that meeting, the remains of 15 Iranians were handed over and the remains of 61 Iraqi martyrs were received. It was also agreed that both sides would continue to search, each on his own territory, for the remains of war victims and that a third meeting would be held later between the two sides to conduct the swap.

The Foreign Ministry finds Gen. Zadah's statements very strange because they contradict truth and reality. The competent Iraqi authorities, based on the above minutes, are still searching for the remains of Iranians on Iraq's territory. The meetings cited above refute the claims of the Iranian general. These claims are in harmony with Iran's constant policy that seeks to exploit humanitarian issues to achieve well-known political purposes, including covering its violations of the provisions of the Third Geneva Convention of 1949 on treating POW's. This Convention applies to Iraqi POW's, which Iran still holds in violation of the above Convention.

The Foreign Ministry denounces the Iranian general's statement that the remains of the martyrs could be handed over to their relatives directly without coordinating with Iraqi authorities. This clearly indicates that the Iranian side is not serious about implementing what was agreed upon concerning humanitarian issues, including the exchange of the remains of war victims.

The Government of Iraq reasserts its eagerness to implement what was agreed upon with the Iranian side regarding the exchange of the remains of war victims and also to resolve all outstanding humanitarian issues, primarily the release of Iraqi POW's. Iraq unilaterally released all Iranian POW's in August 1990.

[Date] Baghdad, 15 January 1996

Foreign Minister Comments on French Proposal

JN1001103896 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0802 GMT 10 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Baghdad, 10 Jan (INA)—Iraq has emphasized that the effects of the unjust blockade on the life of the Iraqi people and the resulting human suffering are no secret to the United Nations and world public opinion.

This came in a statement to INA by Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf on the French proposal which was made by the French representative at the UN Security Council on 5 January requesting the UN secretary general to dispatch a mission to Iraq to study the Iraqi people's suffering as a result of the blockade. [passage omitted]

The following is the text of the foreign minister's statement to INA:

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INA has asked Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf about the French proposal which was presented by the French representative to the UN Security Council on 5 January 1996 requesting the UN secretary general to dispatch a mission to Iraq to study Iraq's human suffering, and to submit an accurate and credible report to the UN Security Council to acquaint it with the current humanitarian situation in Iraq, and with a detailed analysis of the conditions of the social and economic life, whose deterioration has greatly affected the Iraqi citizens. Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf answered the INA question as follows:

I. The unjust and oppressive blockade imposed on Iraq has entered its sixth year. We exposed this unjust blockade over the past five years. Many honest voices in the Arab world and the world at large called for ending the injustice and oppression against Iraq, especially since it fulfilled all the substantial obligations enshrined in the UN Security Council resolutions, regardless of the nature of these resolutions, particularly the obligations related to the requirements for lifting the blockade. However, the blockade has continued to be imposed on Iraq due to the oppression and intransigence of a small number of the influential UN Security Council members, as well as their insistence on maintaining the blockade for political objectives that have nothing to do with the UN Security Council resolutions.

II. Over the past five years, a large number of UN missions, organizations, and specialized agencies, visited Iraq, became acquainted with the human suffering of our people and country, and prepared full and detailed reports explaining the grave harm caused by the unjust blockade clamped on Iraq. Here are some of the names of these missions:

1. The joint UNICEF-WHO team, in February 1991, during the 30- state aggression against Iraq.
2. The mission of the UN General Secretariat, led by (Marti Ihtisari), the then assistant UN secretary general, in March 1991.
3. The mission of the UN secretary general's special executive envoy in June 1991.
4. The FAO mission in July 1991.
5. The U.S. Harvard University mission in August 1991.
6. The FAO Regional Bureau's mission in September 1992.
7. The (Eric Hopkins) UNICEF mission in January 1993.
8. The UN mission on the assessment of humanitarian needs in Iraq in March 1993.
9. The joint FAO-World Food Program mission in June 1993.
10. The second joint FAO-World Food Program mission in November 1993.
11. The mission of the League of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in December 1993.
12. The FAO mission in September 1995.

These are some of the UN and other missions which visited Iraq and submitted reports and studies which included accurate, detailed, and objective information about Iraq's human suffering as a result of the unjust blockade imposed on it. Some of these missions frankly warned against the continuation of this unjust blockade.

These missions did not include any Iraqi individual; all their members were foreigners and employees in the United Nations and its organizations and specialized agencies.

Despite all these missions and their reports, the Security Council stood idly by, and the human suffering in Iraq continued. Therefore, we believe that the United Nations and the world public opinion are aware of the impact of the unjust blockade on our people's life and on our country's economy as well as the resulting human suffering.

III. The success or failure of the new French proposal depends on the way in which the Security Council addresses the humanitarian issue in Iraq as a result of the unjust blockade as well as on the Security Council's seriousness and readiness to deal objectively with facts away from political considerations which prompt a few Security Council members to show intransigence and adopt inhuman and illegal positions. If the Security Council approves the following steps, this will be positively reflected on the French proposal:

A. Permitting Iraq, in accordance with Paragraph 20 of Resolution 687, to use its frozen assets to purchase medicine and food and all basic civil needs of the Iraqi people. In 1991 and in some months in 1992, Iraq used some of its frozen funds for this purpose. However, prompted by a few of its members who have political motives, the Security Council issued Resolution 778 which obstructed Paragraph 20 of Resolution 687 and imposed impossible restrictions that prevented Iraq from using its frozen assets.

B. Canceling the restrictions and complications which some Security Council members added to the Sanctions Committee's methods of action when studying the offers to import basic civil commodities and materials to Iraq. These offers were made by some Arab and foreign states and companies.

The nonaligned group at the Security Council previously made an integrated proposal in this regard, and the

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Security Council could now endorse it in order to make the French proposal a success.

C. Addressing cases of intransigence and arbitrary attitudes shown by the influential minority of the Security Council members. This minority seeks to impose arbitrary and illegal interpretations of the Security Council resolutions. The positions of this minority are preventing the success of any objective and legal proposal or position which other Security Council members try to take.

Permitting Iraq to use its frozen assets to purchase food, medicine, and basic civil commodities and easing the Sanctions Committee's methods of action in accordance with the proposal made by the Nonaligned group as well as addressing the intransigent and arbitrary positions and the illegal interpretations made by the minority at the Security Council are the practical steps that can make the outcome of the French proposal positive and worthwhile.

Information Minister Views French Proposal

NC1401173696 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1520 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 14 Jan (INA)—Iraq has urged the UN Security Council to take practical measures to end its suffering and not to just submit reports on this suffering.

Commenting on reports that the Security Council might start deliberations on 15 January on a French proposal to send a UN mission to Iraq to study living conditions there, 'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abd-al-Ghafur, minister of culture and information, told INA:

Undoubtedly, the sound course to achieve this goal is known. It lies in the implementation of Article 22 of Security Council Resolution 687 as a prelude to ending the unjust blockade after Iraq has fulfilled its essential obligations in accordance with the aforementioned resolution and after it has proved in words and deeds its desire to continue objective and legal cooperation with the Security Council and its special commission.

The minister of culture and information added: However, this course has remained blocked because of U.S. arbitrariness and intransigence at the Security Council and its insistence on inflicting more harm on Iraq and its people under the illusion of achieving mischievous political gains that are known to everyone. It is necessary to point to another fact, namely that Iraq's suffering is not unknown to or concealed from anyone, but is known in detail whether by the United Nations and the Security Council in particular or by states, governments, and peoples. Everyone knows the number of UN missions that have visited Iraq and submitted detailed and heartbreaking reports on the living conditions we are facing. This is in addition to the specialized reports published by medical and health delegations that have visited Iraq and the thousands of articles and investigative reports disseminated by world radio and television stations on the Iraqis' suffering. These reports have continuously exposed the scope of the crime being committed against Iraq and its people as result of the unjustified continuation of the blockade, which has no legal or humanitarian basis.

The minister of culture and information said: For any proposal to be positive, it must allow Iraq to use its funds frozen abroad to buy food and medicine and for humanitarian requirements. It must also simplify the work of the boycott committee. It can do this by accepting and implementing the proposal already submitted by the Nonaligned group at the Security Council on the work of this committee. He added: Those who are sincere about the living conditions facing Iraq are required not to impose arbitrary restrictions that forbid Iraq from using its frozen funds to buy its humanitarian requirements. Those who are sincere in their call to lift the injustice on Iraq can demand that all basic humanitarian and civilian materials be excluded from the arbitrary boycott system imposed on Iraq. The Security Council can take all these simple measures quickly and easily. We urge it to take them in line with international charters and norms and human rights and in isolation from the legal and inhumane pressure exercised by some quarters in the Security Council.

In conclusion, the minister of culture and information said: As President Saddam Husayn expressed in his speech on 6 January on the 75th anniversary of the brave Iraqi Army, the Iraqi people will view each step that contains goodwill and correct legal vision with appreciation and respect. At the same time it will multiply its curse and confrontation of each step that contains bad will and ulterior motives.

Trade by Truck With Turkey Reportedly Flourishing

NC1501160396 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1400 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Diplomatic sources have reported that the transport of goods by truck between Iraq and Turkey is flourishing again despite the embargo on Iraq caused by Saddam Husayn's actions. The sources said that approximately 1,000 trucks cross the border every day and that Iraq obtains most of its sugar and flour supplies from Turkey. They added that Turkish trucks also transport to Iraq fruits, vegetables, sweets,

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vehicle tires, vehicle batteries, vehicle spare parts, and industrial detergents.

'Huge' Explosion Near Commerce Ministry Reported

NC1301152996 (Clandestine) Voice of the Iraqi People in Arabic 1500 GMT 13 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A huge explosion rocked the area surrounding the Iraqi Ministry of Commerce building in Baghdad in the middle of last week, causing heavy material damage.

A statement by the Unified Iraqi National Congress pointed out that the explosion was part of a series of explosions occurring in Baghdad and other cities, which indicates laxity in security measures.

Moreover, the tyrant's troops have bombarded Kurdish villages in the suburbs of Irbil for four days in a row and sent military reinforcements to the southern parts of the city.

Chief of Staff: 38 States Part of 'Aggression'

JN0601125496 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0750 GMT 6 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 6 Jan (INA)—The staff general chief of staff of the Iraqi Army has revealed that 38 states actually took part in the aggression against Iraq in the Mother of Battles, and not 33 states as reported. In a statement published by AL-JUMHURIYAH today, Saturday, on the 75th anniversary of the Iraqi Army, he said these states used all kinds of weapons against Iraq, including internationally banned armaments.

He added that Iraq had managed to take the necessary measures to to confront theses weapons. These battles have enriched the army's experience in the combat and tactical fields, and this experience is now being passed on at military colleges and institutes.

It is worth mentioning that the 17-30 July Revolution is considered the most decisive turning point in the history of the Iraqi Army. The revolution has revived, restructured, and reorganized the Army on sound bases.

Former Minister Joins Opposition in North

NC1101161996 (Clandestine) Voice of the Iraqi People in Arabic 1500 GMT 11 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Abd-al-Sattar Tahir Sharif, former adviser in the Iraqi presidential office and former minister of municipalities and communications, arrived in northern Iraq last week and joined the Iraqi opposition.

In a press conference held in Irbil, Sharif announced that he had disagreed with tyrant Saddam several years ago, but could not manage to join the opposition before because he was closely watched by the security agencies. The former minister quoted Sab'awi al-Tikriti, Saddam's half brother who was director of the Public Security Directorate, as saying that the regime has executed 8,000 Kurds and Kurdish citizens living outside Kurdistan and buried them in mass graves near al-Salman district of al-Muthanna Governorate.

It is worth noting that 20 years ago 'Abd-al-Sattar Sharif set up a pro-government Kurdish party. He held several ministerial posts and served as an adviser to tyrant Saddam before fleeing to northern Iraq.

Al-Samarra'i Says Regime Possesses Biological Weapons

NC1101162096 (Clandestine) Voice of the Iraqi People in Arabic 1500 GMT 11 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Staff Major General Wafiq al-Samarra'i, former chief of Iraqi Military Intelligence, told Cairo AL-AHRAM yesterday that the tyrant regime still possesses biological weapons that have not yet been destroyed.

Al-Samarra'i added that the regime still keeps hundreds of Kuwaiti prisoners in its jails. They were formerly held in al-Radwaniyah detention camp near Baghdad. The regime also executed a large number of prisoners who were not registered.

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Baraq on Syria, Need for Christopher Visit

TA1101161396 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 11 Jan 96

[Report by political correspondent Udi Segal from the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] We have just heard a media briefing by Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, after his meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher. He said that the aim of Christopher's current visit to the region is, in the first stage, to expand the team for the talks to deal with additional issues — namely, have the team include an army officer and an economics expert. He said that these are not yet real negotiations. This is the stage of feelers, he stated, in which we aim at charting the issues for negotiations in which the parties will examine each other's stands. We will know whether progress with the Syrians will be possible in the next round of talks on the basis of these charts.

Many Jerusalem elements have said that Christopher's current visit is not the substantive one in which the big decisions will be made. Christopher came here only to take a message to al-Asad urging him to expand the mandate he gives his men to discuss issues pertaining to normalization — on which we have not yet received satisfactory answers as well — and other issues, such as security arrangements, water, and additional economic matters. Borders are not being discussed yet, and maps are not being drawn.

We asked Baraq whether he believes that the Syrians are partners for negotiations today, after the first round of talks at Wye Plantation. He told us a short while ago:

[Begin Baraq recording] We are holding contacts with the Syrians. There is definitely room for what could be termed cautious optimism, but it is too early to determine whether we have a partner for extensive, substantive, and thorough negotiations of the issues. I suppose that after the current Christopher visit and after another round of talks is held at Wye Plantation, there may be a need for an additional visit by Christopher. Only after this, I believe, will we know what we are talking about and whether we have a partner with which we can enter negotiations. [end recording]

Baraq's remarks seem to mean that Christopher will be here on another visit in two to three weeks, after the next round of talks in Maryland that is scheduled to begin on 21 January. Then, we will be able to know more about the Syrian stand.

Time is of the essence for both Israel and the United States, due to the elections. Foreign Minister Baraq, however, said that we are not conducting negotiations based on dates, nor under pressure. We we will make an agreement at all cost.

There definitely seems to be a contradiction here. Speaking after the last round of talks, Uri Savir said we have a partner for negotiations, while Baraq said today he is not yet convinced of this. As a rule, the feeling in Jerusalem is: The answers that arrived from Damascus are a good start. This is the first time that a real discussion is being held. The Syrians are willing to listen to ideas they had refused to listen to in the past. At the time, they were unwilling to discuss anything other than headlines such as normalization and economic relations. This time they were open to listening, but have not yet commented. [passage omitted]

Further on Baraq Comments on Syria

TA1501170796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 15 Jan 96

[Report by David Ze'ev]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] [passage omitted] Earlier, Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq pushed aside reporters' assertions that Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad is dragging his feet, waiting for Israel to give in to Syrian demands.

[Begin Baraq recording] I don't think so. I think that he is making progress, maybe not in the pace or swiftness that we would expect, but maybe in a more daring way that some of us expected. I believe that we have still a few weeks before it will be clear whether the ground is ripe for full-fledged negotiations with Syria or not. [end recording]

The foreign minister spoke to reporters after his appearance at the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. According to a Knesset official present at the closed-door meeting, Baraq said the Syrians know the water of the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River are for Israel's exclusive use. And, in response to a question from Likud committee member Binyamin Netanyahu, Baraq said Israel would not be willing to distribute the water supply. In the foreign minister's words, the water is ours and has to be ours.

He also said the Syrians have agreed that Lebanon is a subject of the negotiations. [passage omitted]

[A related report by Yo'el Nir on Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1605 GMT on 15 January notes that addressing the Knesset Committee, "Baraq described the talks with Syria as explorations or feelers but definitely not contacts or negotiations. According to him, al-Asad is still considering the possibility of entering into negotiations. We have a partner to explorations, and the

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question is whether we have a partner to the type of peace that we want. There is no answer for that, Baraq said."

[Nir goes on to say that "hinting at Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir's position, Baraq said he was not pessimistic but rather sober, and proposed to wait two to three weeks until we ascertain where al-Asad is headed."]

Rabinovich on Christopher Visit, Syria Talks

TA1201091596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0500 GMT 12 Jan 96

[Telephone interview with Ambassador to Washington Itamar Rabinovich, member of the negotiating team with Syria, by correspondent Arye Shaqed on 12 January; place not given — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Rabinovich] It is now clear to everybody that there is not only a national timetable, but also a political one, and that that is true not only for the United States but also for Israel. With the pace of developments so far, it will be difficult to meet that timetable.

[Shaqed] The U.S. Department of State spokesman said that Secretary Christopher will discuss with President al-Asad issues of substance. Are the main issues — security arrangements, borders, normalization, and of course the Golan Heights withdrawal — already being discussed?

[Rabinovich] The purpose of Secretary Christopher's visit is not procedural. It is meant not only to prepare the next round of the talks, which we expect to take place at Wye Plantation in Maryland before the end of the month, but also to make sure that there is substantial progress in this round. The negotiating procedure with Syria is as follows: The Syrian leadership does not meet directly with the Israeli leadership. The Israeli and Syrian negotiators talk until they reach the limit of the Syrian negotiator's mandate, and then either the U.S. president intervenes — as he has already done twice — or the secretary of state comes to the region — as he has already done 16 times — and face to face with al-Asad tries to extract a wide mandate to advance the negotiations.

[Shaqed] If so, do you think that in the upcoming round of talks at Wye Plantations there will be expanded teams, including army officers and economists?

[Rabinovich] No, I cannot expect anything. What I can tell you is that that is our recommendation, and that we hope that the Syrians will support that effort. Format is not everything. The aim is not simply to expand the nuclear negotiating team, but also to enable parallel discussions on all the issues. For that purpose, we need people who can discuss two very important issues: security arrangements and water.

[Shaqed] You said that the Syrians come to the talks with a limited mandate from President al-Asad. What do you think the chances are for raising the level of the talks soon since we have often said that meetings at a higher level could lead to a significant breakthrough?

[Rabinovich] Syria has a sole decisionmaker, and that is President al-Asad. Raising the level not only is a technical act of improving the negotiations, but also contains a political message. When we talk about raising the level of the negotiations, we mean not only to improve them, but also to receive the political message to which I referred. I think that the Syrians and President al-Asad understand that these negotiations cannot be completed or even advanced significantly without such meetings. I am not certain that the Syrians have made a decision, which should happen very soon. I hope we will know more when Secretary Christopher returns, or in several weeks at most.

Rabinovich on Christopher's Damascus Remarks

TA1201191196 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 12 Jan 96

[Interview with Professor Itamar Rabinovich, ambassador to the United States, by Yisra'el Segal in the Tel Aviv studio — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Segal] Good evening, Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich in our Tel Aviv studio.

[Rabinovich] Good evening.

[Segal] Perhaps we can watch Secretary Christopher's appearance in Damascus, recorded by Ehud Ya'ari just a few minutes ago, before we start our talk. That will give us some perspective on what happened in Damascus today. [passage omitted]

[Segal] Mr. Rabinovich, there is no more reference to constructive talks [preceding two words in English]. The secretary of state, famous for his reserved language, says: We have crossed an important obstacle. What obstacle does he mean?

[Rabinovich] Yisra'el, permit me to correct your translation, because we had the privilege to hear the actual remarks the way they were made by the secretary of state, and the term in English he used was threshold [preceding word in English], which does not mean an obstacle. What he meant was that we have risen a rung, or crossed a certain threshold. It does not mean we have overcome a difficulty, but that we have risen to a new level. It probably refers, first of all, to the addition of

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officers and of the security issue to our agenda and to the list of participants. We will know more when our American colleagues land here later tonight, when we will be able to get some concrete, clear impressions of what happened in Damascus by way of an advance on the work session we are scheduled to hold tomorrow night.

[Segal] Do you agree, however, that this term — and I accept your correction — of a new threshold is uncommon in the reserved diplomatic terminology?

[Rabinovich] A statement like that contains some aspects that are on the optimistic side, and others that are rather measured. It is true that a new threshold is a promising and positive term, but the secretary of state also implied that difficulties can be expected along the way. You must have noticed that he did not refer to any time dimension. He spoke of good will, of what will happen if and when an agreement is achieved. The phrasing obviously indicates that the experienced American diplomats chose to note the fact that something significant took place in the Damascus talks, but also to avoid raising premature and perhaps insufficiently founded expectations.

[Segal] And tomorrow, as soon as the Sabbath is over, the Israelis will meet with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, after which we will all know, hopefully, what happened in Damascus today. Thank you very much, Ambassador Rabinovich.

[Rabinovich] Glad to oblige.

Peres, Christopher Hold Joint News Conference

TA1301195396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1845 GMT 13 Jan 96

[News conference by Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher with domestic correspondents at the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem — live, in English]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Peres] Ladies and gentlemen, I welcome the secretary upon his return from Damascus. We just had a meeting, and we got the impressions of the secretary and the information concerning the peace negotiations. I can say in one word, to summarize my own impressions, that things are moving ahead. We know that we have an important agenda. You cannot achieve everything in one jump, but my general impression is of a positive nature. May I suggest that the secretary will speak directly to you. [passage omitted]

[Peres] I'd like just to say another word. We clearly agreed that our delegation will go to Wye Plantation on the 24th of this month to continue the negotiations in response to the proposal introduced by the secretary. And then, a general remark: From our experience we know that in the negotiations you have to keep the right air for a dialogue. It's not less important than the different plans introduced on the table. And, I feel to this very day that we have established a dialogue that may lead all of us to a real peace negotiation. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] Can I ask both of you, gentlemen, to address a confusing issue for those of us who were in Damascus yesterday. We had the impression, after public and private briefings with American officials, that there is a great deal of optimism about the next phase, that a threshold had indeed been crossed. But today, Israeli officials and Israeli press have indicated something between moderate optimism to moderate disappointment. Can you help explain the discrepancy?

[Peres] I am not aware of any moderate disappointment. I don't think this is an Israeli expression. I think we got the feeling that things are moving ahead, as I have said. I know it's very difficult, because the press would like us to say, was it a breakthrough or a breakdown. Well, when you negotiate, you're not engaging yourself in breakthroughs or breakdowns, but in really moving ahead, and my impression is that the visit of the secretary to Damascus moved things ahead, and things are moving ahead.

[Correspondent] Is your optimism only moderate?

[Peres] No. Moderate belongs to our character, but when it comes to the peace — no, I think it's very important progress. [passage omitted]

[Israel Television Channel 2 political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen, in Hebrew] Mr. Prime Minister, this week we heard conflicting views by Israelis on the key question of whether Damascus is a partner for full peace of the kind you mean between Israel and Syria. Are you able you answer this question now?

[Peres, in Hebrew] We do have a partner, but there are a series of major issues ahead of us. Furthermore, I think it is my duty to tell the Israeli public this: Our main consideration is not the speed of the negotiations, but rather the right content, which should build a relationship that will survive the test of reality. For that reason everything is being properly examined. I must note, however, that over the past weeks, a dialogue has developed between Damascus and Jerusalem, between President al-Asad and us, a dialogue we appreciate, one I hope will deepen and gather strength with time.

[Correspondent] Mr. Prime Minister, are you impressed — as some of the American spin-meisters are — that President al-Asad has developed a sort of a more informal approach? In Damascus, we were told he sat

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at a table, members of his team asked questions. Does that suggest to you some easing of authoritarian rule, some trend that you would encourage, and does it mean something so far as an Israeli-Syrian agreement, or is it just atmospherics?

[Peres] I think that....[pauses] Our impression is really that the president of Syria has adopted a more informal approach, and that is extremely important, because you can't come with hard stones to create a negotiation; you will be all the time frightened and worried. It is only when you come with soft ideas that everybody can introduce freely, without trying to make any conditions. [sentence as heard] And we feel that this is the spirit today in Damascus, too. I don't have to comment (?anything) about the system of government in Syria; that's not my job. I'm talking about the peace negotiations, and I feel very much encouraged by it, because it's not the first time that we are negotiating and, compared with other negotiations....[pauses] So what you call atmospherics is necessary to (?breathe) the negotiation. But [words indistinct] that we made progress. I would give for example an issue which is very important to President al-Asad and to us, and that is the comprehensiveness of the peace. You know, for the first time we sense that the (?option) was introduced to bring an end to all the wars in the Middle East, and that Syria can play a leading role in it. I am encouraged by the fact the Syrian president is ready both to provide leadership and support to it. I mean, if we can really bring the message to all the people in the Middle East: Gentlemen, maybe we are nearing the end of the war, it's a real message, it has nothing to do with atmospherics.

[Qol Yisra'el's political correspondent Shlomo Raz, in Hebrew] Mr. Prime Minister, Israel expected from the start that Syria would agree to expand the delegations to include economists and water experts, and yet they only consented to a previously agreed-on issue — the inclusion of a senior officer — a major general, in this case.

[Peres, in Hebrew] That is incorrect. First of all, they did not agree to the inclusion of an army representative until now. For the past five months the Syrians have been saying that they will not include anyone from the army, and yet they agreed to it this time. Now, for the economic matter: We agreed that economic issues would be discussed in the existing framework. A situation has been created in which the two delegations have a common language and an ability to maintain a dialogue on various issues, including this one. I think, therefore, that a change has taken place, and it is a favorable one.

[Raz, in Hebrew] Does the change meet the expectations you had of this shuttle tour by Secretary Christopher?

[Peres, in Hebrew] Again, we expected to be able to move on to additional issues, beyond the ones discussed at Wye Plantation, and I think an opportunity for that has emerged. I would like to speak cautiously. I do not want to give the impression that all the problems have been solved. They have not. I am saying progress has been made, and that progress is definitely valuable, and we will continue to make progress along this path. [passage omitted] [live feed ceases before end of news conference]

Report Says Syria Does Not Plan To Speed Up Talks

TA1301120496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 13 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Syria is not planning to speed up the negotiations with Israel, according to an initial report by the U.S. delegation accompanying Secretary Christopher to his talks in Damascus.

Secretary Christopher will report to the prime minister tonight on his talks with President al-Asad. An Israeli source told our political correspondent Shlomo Raz that Syria intends to advance in the talks at a measured pace, or in the words of the source, at al-Asad's pace. Israeli sources said that the report they received on the al-Asad-Christopher talks was moderately optimistic. The United States now plans to invest a greater effort in the next round of talks, which is due to start in Maryland on 24 January.

It was reported last night that Syria is prepared to expand the talks with Israel to include military officers, but not economic experts. Secretary Christopher will confer with Yasir 'Arafat in Gaza today.

Source: 'Sweeping' Peace Demanded in Syria Talks

TA1201104796 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 12 Jan 96 p A4

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Text] A senior political source said yesterday that the Israeli proposals concerning a sweeping normalization and comprehensive regional peace are meant to be a counterweight to the Syrian demand for an Israeli withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 lines.

Briefing political correspondents, the source noted that "because we know the depth of the Syrian demands in various areas, the only way of providing meaning to the formula of 'the depth of the withdrawal will be tantamount to the depth of the peace' is not to

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set as a goal the attainment of something similar to the peace with Egypt, which remains problematic even after 20 years. The goal should be a peace that is very comprehensive in terms of the depth of the normalization and very demanding in its range."

[A similar report by political correspondent Udi Segal on Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 0500 GMT on 12 January adds that the senior source defined Israel's demands regarding normalization as "components of peace like in the European countries. When told by a journalist that the Syrians have no such relations with any Arab country, the source replied: If the Syrians do not meet our demands for full peace, we will not be able to provide the other part of the formula — that is, full withdrawal."]

The senior source added that "the Syrians hold no Israeli political commitment on the depth of the withdrawal, which is our only bargaining card." According to him, Israel will not agree to discuss the borders before the Syrian position on the substance of peace and the security arrangements is clear. Nevertheless, the source noted, "I do not think we will go back to the 4 June 1967 lines, with the Syrians' dipping their feet in Lake Tiberias, but it would be wrong to say that at this point."

The source went on to say: "We want to see whether we have a partner, and at this stage we do not know whether we have one for a substantial and detailed discussion about the peace agreements."

According to him, no link should be established between the negotiations and the elections. He pointed out that Israel is awaiting Damascus' answer, including its consent to pursue the talks at Wye Plantation and to expand the delegations to include security, economic, and even water experts.

The source explained: "After all, we must know that we exhausted this possibility. It would be embarrassing if we failed to reach an agreement with Syria and did not know why."

He added: "We will not go for an agreement at any cost, and we did not commit ourselves to attaining it by a certain date. We are striving for a comprehensive and sweeping peace. There is no way we are going to neglect our considerations concerning security, water, and terror, and we will give no commitment on the withdrawal before we know what we are getting from the other side and whether it is worth it."

The senior source defined the Maryland talks as "exploratory." U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will conduct another shuttle trip after the next round of talks, and then it will be possible to assess the positions of the sides and ascertain whether detailed negotiations are possible.

According to the source, the Syrians have so far provided only "partial" answers to Israel's proposals, "far from the answers we want." That is why Israel is urging President al-Asad to expand the mandate of the Syrian delegation.

The senior source stressed that there is openness on the Syrian side, which is reflected in their agreement to hear out Israel's proposals about normalization and comprehensive peace. However, the Syrians are looking for peace at a minimal cost, a peace that will not require a deep and significant change from them.

[A report by Aluf Ben and Nitzan Horowitz on pages A1 and A2 of the same paper adds: "The IDF's [Israel Defense Forces] demands for security arrangements within the context of a peace agreement with Syria will require complex and complicated negotiations because there are 'red lines' that cannot be crossed, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres stated this week, summing up a debate about the security components of a future arrangement.

["An IDF study reviewing the political implications of a withdrawal from the Golan Heights was presented in the debate. The study focuses on the deployment of the armies on both sides of the border and reviews Israel's requirements in terms of demilitarization and the thinning-out of troops. It includes scenarios whereby Syrian troops are deployed at various distances from the IDF's front lines, and does not deal with the issue of early warning.

["Peres was told in the debate that the Syrians hold seven armored divisions near the border with Israel. The IDF's order of battle is much smaller, but is deployed to repel a sudden attack on the Golan. A withdrawal would place the IDF in a position of topographical inferiority, at a time when the danger of a sudden attack still exists. That is why Israel must demand a significant reduction of the Syrian forces near the border and the deployment of most of them away from the Israeli border.

["The day after the debate, Peres met Christopher and told him that the complexity of the issues being discussed with Syria preclu?es the attainment of an agreement before the elections, unless the pace of the talks is significantly accelerated."]

Beilin: Next 3 Weeks Crucial for Peace Talks

NC1401214296 Paris AFP in English 2111 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jerusalem, Jan 14 (AFP) — Israel and Syria have only three weeks to make a

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breakthrough if they want to sign an agreement ending their state of war by the end of this year, Yosi Beilin, the Israeli minister for the peace process said Sunday [14 January].

"Without a breakthrough in the negotiations during the next two or three weeks there will be no possibility of achieving peace in 1996," he told Israeli television.

Beilin, warned of the possible consequences for the talks of Israeli and US elections due later this year.

"If we do not reach an accord quickly it will be for the new government in Israel and the new American administration to try to realise the dream of peace after 1996," he added.

Beilin spoke to the television before a cabinet meeting at which Prime Minister Shim'on Peres was to give a report on US Secretary of State Warren Christopher's Middle East peace shuttle, which ended Saturday.

The Israeli Government, disappointed by the meagre results obtained by Christopher during talks with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, raised the possibility on Sunday of calling an early election in June instead of October.

Syria was also downbeat about the prospects for peace, accusing the Jewish state of negotiating in bad faith, in stark contrast to earlier upbeat remarks.

Negotiations are due to restart at Wye Plantation, Maryland, on January 24.

Peres Says 'Target' Peace by Year 2000

TA1501164896 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign policy was the focus of the Labor Knesset faction meeting today. Prime Minister Shim'on Peres attacked those who expressed doubts about the negotiations with Syria. We have given ourselves a target, to reach a comprehensive Middle East peace by the year 2000, Peres said. Our party affairs correspondent Netan'el Semrik reports from the Knesset:

[Begin recording] [Semrik] The expressions of disappointment by senior politicians and ministers about Secretary Christopher's latest shuttle infuriated those leading the process. Last night it was Uri Savir, tonight it is Shim'on Peres, who attacked those he called the doubters.

[Peres] Labor's target — without gossip, speculation, and skepticism — is to bring about a comprehensive peace in the Middle East by the end of the century, that is by the year 2000. Whoever wants to laugh can do so.

[Semrik] The media also came under fire.

[Peres] A negotiating atmosphere has been created. The media refers to measured optimism, moderate optimism, exalted optimism. All these are journalistic terms, and are unimportant.

[Semrik] The prime minister wanted to infuse members of his faction with optimism and made it clear that in the next round of talks in Maryland the Israeli and Syrian delegations will also begin to discuss security issues, but not territory. I do not work with a stopwatch, Peres said.

[A related report by David Ze'ev on Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English at 1500 GMT on 15 January adds: "Prime Minister Shim'on Peres says that U.S. Secretary of State Christopher came away from last week's discussions in Damascus with Syrian agreements on certain issues proposed at the Wye Plantation talks, including economic principles. For the first time, Peres told the Labor Knesset caucus, the Syrians are voicing serious interest in economic subjects. We will begin cautious discussions on security arrangements, as Peres put it, in addition to talks on water arrangements. And, I believe, the next round after Wye Plantation will bear fruit as well."]

[Peres] I cannot and will not provide a time limit. I also suggest that under no circumstances should we link the political process with elections; these are two different events. Labor must decide if it wants the elections on time or on a different date, but under no circumstances should it link the elections to the political negotiations.

[Semrik] Labor Knesset members smiled when they heard Peres' remarks. One of them asserted that when Peres says there is no time pressure on the national level, it means that there is the pressure of time on the domestic level. [end recording]

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1605 GMT on 15 January carries a related report by Yo'el Nir. Referring to the understandings Secretary Christopher brought back from Damascus, Prime Minister Peres says in a recorded passage: "One understanding is for all of us to make an effort to make this peace comprehensive; namely, not just peace with Syria, but for Syria to lead to peace with the other countries with which we have not yet made peace. And, as noted here, we are going about it country by country.

["Then there are several economic propositions. This is the first time that Syria has shown any serious interest in economic issues. We will start talking cautiously about issues pertaining to security arrangements. Then there will be talks about water arrangements, and I believe that the next round of talks at Wye Plantation will also bear fruit."

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[Nir quotes Peres as saying that "the United States has put its full weight behind us to bring about a comprehensive peace in the Middle East." In a recorded passage, Peres says: "We are now working together with the Americans to establish an international body to help uphold peace, since the Americans alone won't be able to set up the infrastructures required for peace; on the establishment of a peace mechanism in the Middle East; and on the promotion of the negotiations between us and the Syrians.

["I cannot tell you everything, there are some things I cannot talk about. However, as a man who has done what he has done in three previous negotiations, I affirm that there has been a good beginning."]

Sources Confirm Syrian Restrictions on Hizballah

TA1501193696 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 15 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad once again promised to see about toning down Hizballah's activities in south Lebanon. The promise was given to U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, and our Arab affairs correspondent Ehud Ya'ari reports that Israeli sources confirmed that Syria has imposed new restrictions on attacks on the security zone. [passage omitted]

Disagreement, Change in Peres Stand on Syria Seen

TA1401114796 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 14 Jan 96 p A1

[Commentary by Aluf Ben: "Three Noes"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad sent U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher back to Jerusalem with three noes: no to the acceleration of the talks; no to high-level meetings; and a partial no to the framework Israel had suggested — that security, economy, and water experts join the delegations when the talks resume in Maryland.

Al-Asad agreed to having an officer join each delegation, seven months after the officers talks have been suspended. The other experts will join the delegations later on. He is also willing to accept the concept of comprehensive peace, according to which all the Arab countries will join the Israeli-Syrian agreement — presenting al-Asad as the leader of the Middle East, the man who calls the shots and can put an end to wars.

Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq say that there is no secret channel of talks with Syria and that the only negotiations held are those mediated by the Americans. If this is true, there is doubt that an agreement with Syria will be attained before the Israeli elections, even if they are held in October.

On the eve of Christopher's departure for Damascus, Peres warned him that unless the pace of negotiations is really stepped up, there will be no agreement before the elections. Al-Asad made it clear to the secretary of state that he will not accept the Israeli schedule and that he has his own agenda. Last night, Peres and Christopher tried to present a unified optimistic front, but an interesting change has occurred in the remarks the prime minister made before and after the Christopher-al-Asad meeting: On 10 January, Peres said: "There are only a few months until the elections, and I doubt that we will succeed, unless an intensive effort is made." Last night, after being briefed about the Damascus meeting, he said: "We are conducting the negotiations regardless of the elections."

The shift in Peres' stand was the result of, among other things, a meeting he held last week with the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] top brass who presented him with their demands for security arrangements on the Golan, primarily the need to distance the Syrian Army from the Israeli border. In fact, the army made it clear to Peres that it would not lend its hand to accelerated negotiations that only aim at getting a good photo for electoral purposes. Peres' response was harsh. According to one source, he told the officers: "If these are your demands, there will be no agreement." Speaking at a closed meeting yesterday, the prime minister said on the issue of security arrangements that "the situation is not bright, but we have not yet exhausted all the options."

[A related report by Aluf Ben on the same page of HA'ARETZ adds that, speaking on the issue of water in yesterday's closed meeting, "Peres further said: 'We have two lakes. One is dead (the Dead Sea); and if we give up on the other (Lake Tiberias), it would be suicide.'" The report also says that "after his meeting with Christopher, Peres told the members of the Israeli negotiating team that 'there are good things, and there are big problems.'"]

The Maryland talks and Christopher's visit have revealed serious disagreements among the members of the top Israeli forum involved in the negotiations with Syria. Peres says we have a partner for serious negotiations, and Baraq says there is no such partner yet. The prime minister speaks of a comprehensive peace and economic development, while "a senior political source" told reporters that Israel's offers for normalization are meant to counterbalance the Syrian demands, because al-Asad is afraid of opening his country's gates. In the Israeli team, it is said that the picture will become clear only

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after Christopher's next visit to the region, following the next round of talks in Maryland.

Vice President Gore Arrives, Greeted by Peres

TA1501172896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. Vice President Al Gore has arrived in Israel. He was greeted at the airport by Prime Minister Shim'on Peres. Gore said that the enemies of peace see that it is gaining ground and hear all Israelis supporting peace. Prime Minister Peres said that in Israel's eyes peace is a free choice, a moral decision, and a determined course.

Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that Vice President Gore is currently holding a private meeting with Mrs. Le'a Rabin.

Netanyahu Cancels Meeting With Gore

TA1501113896 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1100 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] There has been a minor diplomatic incident prior to the visit by Vice President Al Gore, who arrives in Israel tonight. Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu decided to cancel their meeting planned for tonight. Our correspondent Netan'el Semrik is on the line with more details:

[Semrik] The story reached us in the Knesset during the past hour. A meeting was due to have taken place in the Knesset between Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu and Vice President Al Gore at 2145 [1945 GMT] tonight. Netanyahu aides claim the meeting at that late hour was initiated by the Americans. After Netanyahu learned today that he was allocated only 10 minutes for such an important meeting, he swallowed his pride and decided he could live without it, thereby freeing 10 minutes in Vice President Gore's tight schedule.

Peres, Baraq, Gore Hold Meetings

TA1601120596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1005 GMT 16 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres this morning met U.S. Vice President Al Gore. During the meeting it transpired that the United States plans to submit its own bridging proposals on the Israeli-Syrian negotiations. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports:

[Begin recording] [Raz] I would even say that judging by the remarks made by Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, the United States has already submitted such proposals. Following the meeting the prime minister continued to promote the negotiations with Syria — we know that the press, at least, is somewhat doubtful on this issue. Beyond giving a high grade to Warren Christopher's last shuttle in our region, the prime minister answered a question I posed him by saying that the United States has already submitted its own bridging proposals to the two sides:

[Peres] The United States is very active. I think that the secretary's visit heralded a change in the procedures that have governed our contacts with the Syrians. I believe it is more logical first of all to reach an agreement and only then to put it down in writing, rather than write things down and then discovering there is no agreement. The United States is attempting to fulfill the role of mediator in the verbal sense more than in a written one. [passage omitted]

[Raz] Later Vice President Gore held a meeting with Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq. The foreign minister told his American interlocutor that Israel will discuss the depth of withdrawal on the Golan Heights only after it is fully clarified what the Syrian attitude is toward the nature of peace, normalization, and the security arrangements. Baraq raised two additional very interesting points: one concerning the future of the terror organizations operating out of Damascus, the second dealing with the water issue.

Ehud Baraq praised the efforts of the United States in general and Al Gore in particular to prevent Iran, in particular, from obtaining nuclear capabilities. According to Foreign Minister Baraq, Iran is the main long-term threat to stability in the region. Baraq also asked Al Gore to convey a message to 'Arafat, whom he is scheduled to meet soon. The message says Israel expects the Palestinian Authority to continue its struggle against terrorism — this is perhaps related to the various warnings about Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad terrorist plans — as well as to amend the appropriate clauses in the Palestine Covenant.

The last issue raised in the Gore-Baraq meeting was Iraq. Israel continues to support the U.S. dual containment policy aimed against Iran and Iraq. [end recording]

Iranian Intelligence Document Names Targets

TA1201200396 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 12 Jan 96

[Report by Ayala Hason]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Announcer Yisra'el Segal] This report involves a document that had the highest security classification; only 17 persons received it. The document comes from the Iranian intelligence services. The subject of the document: planned terrorist operations against Israel and Israeli and Jewish targets

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throughout the world, in the event Israel launches a military offensive against Iran. It was drafted for the Iranian Supreme Council for National Security following the arrest of Herzl Rad, the Israeli charged with espionage for Iran, was revealed. Ayala Hason has the details:

[Hason] The Herzl Rad affair raised serious apprehensions among Iranian leaders that Israel was planning a military operation against Iran. The Iranian intelligence services then began to make detailed plans for retaliatory operations.

The document reveals that ('Ali Mohammadi Golpoygani), head of the Intelligence and Operations Department at the Iranian Intelligence and Security Ministry, suggests striking seven Israeli production and storage sites for nuclear weapons. According to him, these installations have been positively identified by Iranian intelligence units.

He further suggests striking Israeli and Jewish targets around the world. In Argentina, assassination attempts have been made against Yitzhaq Aviram, Israeli ambassador; and Re'uven Brakha, head of the Jewish community in Argentina. Explosive charges were detonated in airports in Turkey, the Philippines, and countries in Southeast Asia.

The document further reveals that the Iranians fear the penetration of Israeli moles into upper echelons of the Iranian intelligence services.

The author of the document proposes setting up secret residences in Turkey to which Israeli tourists in Turkey are to be taken for the purpose of intelligence investigation and questioning.

Herzl Rad was kidnaped, drugged, and moved in a coffin to Iran, the writer of the document notes. He adds that Rad was released after an intensive interrogation, when his captors realized his motives were materialistic, rather than ideological. They further realized that he was incapable of getting to key officials in Israel.

The document shows that the Iranians' fear of an Israeli plan to launch a military offensive stems from Israeli media reports saying that the Iranians had ordered Rad to assassinate Yitzhaq Rabin and to damage nuclear installations in Israel.

[Segal] Thank you, Ayala. Good evening to Iran expert Menashe Amir. You checked the document again and again; I saw you poring over it for hours today. Is this document authentic?

[Amir] Judging by the contents, the way it is written, the way it is phrased, the way Iranian Intelligence thinks, it seems very, very authentic to me. Were I to judge it by motives and several technical matters, I would have doubts.

[Segal] Are you familiar with the names it mentions?

[Amir] I checked some of the names; they are real names of known Iranian agents. One of them — (Shurideh) — operated in the affair of the assassination of Shahpour Bakhtiar in Paris, and later fled from France to Iran, where he must have attained a key position. There were other people, too. All in all, the document seems very authentic, although I have to qualify my observation: It may well be the work of art of an intelligence service member or someone who was paid a lot of money for....

[Segal, interrupting] In any event, it was someone who is familiar with the tiniest details of Israeli-Iranian intelligence relations.

[Amir] Definitely. The document contains many details, mostly correct and some representing the Iranian establishment's premises in connection with intelligence, the planning of terror operations, and so forth.

[Segal] Ayala Hason, hasn't this document been examined by a former Mosad man, who was an expert on Iran?

[Hason] Yes, and he said the same as Menashe Amir, more or less. He said the document appears to be authentic in the way it is phrased and in the ideology it expresses. The names also seemed authentic to him. He, too, qualified his remarks the same way Menashe Amir has.

[Segal] A no less intriguing question is how we, or Israel, came into possession of the document.

[Hason] The document was secured by Hayim Rad, the brother of Herzl Rad who is standing trial for spying for Iran. Herzl Rad's attorney thought that after the affair took place, there must be some document relating to it in Iran. Together with Hayim Rad, he traveled by circuitous ways to a country we cannot name, where they met with a certain very senior element.

[Segal] Iranian?

[Hason] Iranian. After that, Hayim Rad had another meeting with him, and eventually he got the document from him. Let us hear the two men's remarks:

[Begin videorecording] [Hayim Rad] There were many clandestine trips abroad, and because people's lives are in danger, I cannot say where and how.

[Herzl Rad's attorney Tziyon Amir, identified by caption] Judging by what I know about the document and its contents, it seems absolutely authentic. It refers to

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my client Herzl Rad, and most importantly, it fully and indisputably supports his claim of having been kidnaped by the Iranian intelligence service on Turkish territory, from where he was somehow moved to Tehran. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Baraq on Syrian Talks, Iranian Threat

TA1301122296 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0800 GMT 13 Jan 96

[Telephone interview with Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq by anchorman 'Adi Talmor and political correspondent Udi Segal on 13 January; place not given; from the "In the Current Situation" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Talmor] Good morning, Foreign Minister Baraq.

[Baraq] Good morning to you.

[Talmor] Before discussing Syria, I wish to talk about Iran. Do you know about the document presented on Israel Television last night? Is it reliable and what is its significance?

[Baraq] I did not watch television last night, I was at a family affair.

[Talmor] I will tell you about it. A document, allegedly originating with Iranian intelligence, was presented and it said that if Israel attacks Iran, which they fear, Iran will attack targets in Israel and Jewish targets around the world. Are there any grounds for the Iranian concern that Israel will attack it?

[Baraq] I would not rely on Iranian intelligence documents presented on television as a source for a situation assessment.

[Talmor] I understand you know nothing about it?

[Baraq] I did not watch television. I do not have a clue what it contains.

[Talmor] But there is a connection between the chief of staff's current visit to China and the Chinese announcement of the cancellation of the nuclear reactor deal with Iran. Isn't that so?

[Baraq] I will not make a definite statement about Chinese considerations, which are very complex, in supplying parts or capacities to the Iranians. There is a very wide-ranging international effort to convince the Chinese not to supply any type of nuclear technology to Iran. If the chief of staff makes a contribution to that effort in his talks, it is very welcome.

[Talmor] Now on to Syria. We find it hard to understand this morning whether Christopher's talks in Damascus led to significant progress or if we are treading water. What do you say?

[Baraq] Your correspondents should see both sides of the coin. I did not expect anything else. There is progress, which is slow and measured, because this is a conflict which has gone on for dozens of years, has taken a heavy toll in human life, and involves supreme vital interests on both sides. There is no way to resolve such a conflict during Christopher visits, and definitely not between one newscast and the next, or one Saturday program and the next. We need a great deal of patience and confidence. There will still be a many obstacles along the way, and at this stage, it is even premature to know if there will be full, wide-ranging, and detailed negotiations.

[Segal] But, we cannot ignore our political time aspect. We talk about accelerating the negotiations and there is the Israeli proposal to add economic and water experts — in addition to the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and Syrian officers who will join the talks — during the initial stage of putting out feelers to determine the positions of both sides, while Syrian policy is to make very slow progress as time runs out.

[Baraq] For negotiations, like the tango, it takes two. There is no way to impose a rhythm on the other side that it does not agree to. I think it would be a mistake on our part to tie the negotiations with Syria to elections in Israel. Just think: If we decide on a certain date on which we must achieve results in the negotiations, the very pronouncement of such a date could become a weapon for the Syrians in the negotiations, because when that date approaches the price could be raised.

[Segal] Aren't you disappointed by al-Asad's slow pace?

[Baraq] You know that when I sat with a group of political correspondents three days ago, I told you that's precisely what I anticipate: They will accept the principle that negotiations must continue and they will say that there will be some acceleration in pace. By the way, there is some truth to what the Americans call a new type of dialogue in Damascus, with Faruq al-Shar', al-Mu'allim, and others sitting with al-Asad around the table. At the same time, that is not a substitute for issues of substance. In the long run, we will have to know to what extent the Syrians are prepared for real normalization, wide-ranging economic cooperation, and the prerequisites of resolving security arrangements, water, and terrorism issues. The negotiations will be judged by the ability to meet half-way and not to remain at the starting point on these issues. I believe we need patience. There will be another round at Wye Plantation later in the month. I assume that following it there will be another Christopher visit. After those two weeks it will become clearer to us whether we are facing a

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readiness to enter into detailed negotiations or if the talks will be extended. Both are reasonable possibilities.

[Talmor] But why are we demanding full normalization with Syria when you yourself are comparing al-Asad to [former Romanian President] Ceaucescu. Perhaps he fears that opening up his country to Israel and Israelis will lead to him being deposed from power. Therefore, he fears normalization.

[Baraq] We cannot base a discussion on issues vital to Israel on assumptions and analyses, no matter how scholarly. The only method is to enter into discussions from a position of confidence, internal calm, and patience, but without making a decision that we must make peace at any price and without marking a target date for completing the process. To enter into discussions, we must put the issues on the table — by talking we are not giving up anything — extend a hand to the other side, listen to them, and then see what happens. If it transpires that al-Asad is prepared for normalization, openness, and security arrangements, then it is very important to have a peace settlement with Syria. If it transpires that he is not prepared, then why learn about it from conjecture. Let us sit down at the negotiating table and then decide.

[Segal] On the matter of the comprehensiveness of the agreement, the only significant achievement in the first round of talks was an Israeli present to the Syrians. We told the Syrians: You lead and the Arab world will follow. Don't you think there is a conflict of interests in the fact that while trying to accelerate the Syrians you appear to be giving al-Asad all the cards although you say you do not even know if he is a genuine partner to negotiations?

[Baraq] We are not giving anything away yet. This is only a talking stage. We are not hurrying to say farewell to the Golan Heights. First, we want to understand what type of peace the Syrians are prepared to discuss. It is not correct to say that the comprehensiveness is our present to the Syrians. Israel has an interest in reaching peace with Lebanon. The negotiations will be held with the Lebanese Government, but we know that the Lebanese Government will not start negotiating with us if it does not get the green light from the Syrians. That is why we have an interest in getting to that green light. If there is an agreement with Syria — and as I said before, I do not know if and when it will come about — it is very reasonable to assume that conditions will be formed to enable some of the North African countries and perhaps some of the states on the Arabian peninsula to join. That would be very positive and could be possible.

[Talmor] In such an agreement, do see the Syrians wetting their feet in Lake Tiberias?

[Baraq] I am not in favor of seeing Syrian feet in Lake Tiberias under any circumstances, but I do not think it is right to discuss withdrawal now. It will be discussed in time. There is nothing to yield at present since we do not know if the other side is prepared to discuss peace, normalization, security arrangements, and a reasonable solution to the water and terrorism issues. I want to make a proposal: Be patient and realize that this is a complex issue, which will become clear with time. I believe we are operating very cautiously and responsibly. No hasty moves will be taken. On the other hand, there is no reason not to seriously consider the possibility of peace with a strong state, which has a significant military potential, and to whom it is important to be deleted from the list of hostile states.

[Talmor] Mr. Baraq, you know that what you have just said recalls claims in recent weeks that you are acting like a brake for Shim'on Peres, a role Yitzhaq Rabin performed for Peres, who many believe is running ahead too quickly.

[Baraq] Had the public known the precise details of the intimate dialogue between us and the Americans, I do not think it would have had the impression that the prime minister is rushing ahead too quickly. I think that at this stage we are not even running, we are studying matters. I said earlier that we must not link anything to a political timetable, which does not mean that we are hiding the fact from al-Asad that there are elections here and in the United States. He knows that himself and understands it. I think that from our point of view there should not be any connection between the dates. There should be developments in the negotiations. As a government which operates in a frank and determined way to achieve peace and assure security, whenever we face elections we will address the public and tell them: That is what we have done up to now because we want to assure peace and security for Israel, and now we ask for a renewed mandate to continue.

[Talmor] To conclude, you know the General Staff close up and I am sure you have something to say about the new Shin Bet head 'Ami Ayalon and the fact that for the first time the people of Israel and the entire world know who the head is.

[Baraq] To some extent I welcome the fact that the identity of the head has become known. Our enemies and the world have always known. Only our people have not known. That is why I do not regard it as an important change. In some way, it is a positive change because it is important that the Israeli public knows that 'Ami Ayalon, who is an exceptional person, with major

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achievements to his credit, will rehabilitate the Shin Bet following the major fiasco. [passage omitted]

'Arafat Said To Abandon Stance To Amend Covenant

TA1201124796 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 12 Jan 96 p 5

[Report by Ben Kaspit]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Senior Palestinian Authority officials are working on a proposal whereby instead of abrogating the clauses in the Palestinian National Covenant that call for Israel's elimination, the entire covenant would be abolished and the Palestine National Council would adopt an alternative document.

A report distributed in recent days in Jerusalem notes that the Palestinians would have a hard time abrogating the clauses calling for Israel's elimination. That is why 'Arafat's men are looking into the possibility of canceling the entire covenant and drafting in its place a Palestinian "declaration of independence" which would affirm "the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to a state and to self-determination," and would include the declaration of East Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian state. This way the Palestinians would be able to claim that they had met the requirements of the Oslo B accord without having abrogated the disputed clauses, which is seen as a very problematic feat from an internal Palestinian point of view.

Another report drafted by Mickey Harari of the Foreign Ministry's Political Planning Division shows that 'Arafat has decided to abandon his commitment to amend the clauses in the covenant and believes that he will be able to enter negotiations with Israel on the issue. The report quotes 'Arafat's remarks on the issue, including his speech at Harvard University a month and a half ago: "I would be lying to you if I said that I am going to abrogate what is written in the covenant, since this is not within my responsibility and nobody can do it. However, we can make additions to it, as was done with the U.S. Constitution." [passage omitted]

Fear of Election Day Attack on Carter

TA1401101996 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 14 Jan 96 p A1

[Report by Eytan Rabin]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Israeli intelligence elements have called on the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and the security forces to prepare for the possibility that Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] or Islamic Jihad activists might try to attack former U.S. President Jimmy Carter or other members of the international team of observers who will be here to supervise the Palestinian elections.

It has been decided, therefore, that tight security be placed around Carter, who heads the U.S. team of observers. While in the Palestinian Authority [PA] areas, he will be protected by the Palestinian forces, and when he moves into Israeli territory, he will be protected by the IDF. The former U.S. president will also be protected by his personal bodyguards.

The intelligence sources further reported that 'Arafat has been gaining popularity recently. Contrary to initial estimates that the killing of Yahya 'Ayyash would chase supporters away from 'Arafat, it appears that there has been a rise in support for him. Certain Hamas elements have been helping 'Arafat with various issues, but as individuals. [passage omitted]

The sources added that Hamas activists in Jordan and elsewhere have been pressuring organization members in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank to carry out terror attacks to sabotage the elections process, while Hamas leaders in the territories fear a clash with the PA. [passage omitted]

The intelligence elements also reported that 'Arafat has ordered that Samihah al-Khalil, who is running against him for the PA Council presidency, be given as much help as possible. In doing so, the PA chairman is attempting to ward off claims of undemocratic elections.

Al-Khalil has complained recently that she is not being allowed to travel to East Jerusalem, but when her complaint was examined, it became apparent that she had never filed a request. At the same time, the intelligence elements indicate that, behind the scenes, 'Arafat has instructed his men to assist al-Khalil, even in the attainment of entry permits. The defense establishment has recently granted her and her aides free passage to and in East Jerusalem.

The intelligence report reviews several violent incidents between 'Arafat's supporters and his opponents that took place in rural areas in the territories. In some cases, the Palestinian police have managed to prevent the use of firearms.

Israel intends to avoid confronting Palestinians on election day as much as possible, but the IDF will have to intervene if there is fear that violent Palestinian groups might try to harm soldiers or settlers.

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Cabinet Briefed on Hamas, Security Issues

TA1401121996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] At today's cabinet session, Shin Bet Head Karmi Gilon, Police Commissioner Asaf Hefetz, and Major General Oren Shahor, the coordinator of government activities in the territories, briefed the ministers on security issues.

Our political correspondent reports that the briefings indicate that Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and the Islamic Jihad intend to carry out attacks against Israel in retaliation for the assassination of Yahya 'Ayyash and Fathi al-Shaqaqi. Maj. Gen. Oren Shahor reviewed the preparations in the territories for the Palestinian elections.

The cabinet was also briefed on the activities of 'Uzi Meshulam and his followers. Police Commissioner Hefetz reported on the group's attempts to harm Public Security Minister Moshe Shahal and to sabotage public buildings. The attorney general will investigate reports on the preferential prison treatment enjoyed by the group's members. [passage omitted]

Peres, Shahal, Others on Extremist Group Hit List

TA1501100396 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 15 Jan 96 p 1

[Report by Raine Marcus and Batsheva Tsur]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Several of 'Uzi Meshulam's supporters are planning to attack Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, MKs [Knesset members], State Comptroller Miriam Ben-Porat, Internal Security Minister Moshe Shahal, and various senior police officials, Police Inspector General Asaf Hefetz warned yesterday. Fringe elements of Meshulam's group have an "assassination list," he said.

"The police must act now," he said. "We cannot wait until it's too late. We have witnessed in the past what they are capable of doing. When we tried to negotiate with them during the Yehud siege, they opened fire indiscriminately; they tried to kill prison guard Beni Aviram; we suspect they sabotaged the Bezeq phone exchange in Petah Tiqva a year ago; they threatened to attack Judge Amnon Strashnoff; and we have information that they are planning to sabotage government offices and infrastructure."

Meshulam and his supporters constitute the most violent of the country's extremist groups, and their threats must be taken very seriously, ministers said, after hearing Hefetz's report to the cabinet.

Prime Minister Peres said that public opinion had to be rallied in an effort to oppose the group, which has followers even amongst prestigious sectors of the population, such as air force pilots. Since the group is not registered in any formal fashion, it cannot be legally banned, he added.

Therefore, he said, he has decided to set up a special committee — made up of Shahal, Justice Minister David Liba'i, and Attorney-General Mikha'el Ben-Ya'ir — that over the next few days will look into what action can be taken against Meshulam's group.

Hefetz spoke following yesterday's arrest of six of Meshulam's followers. The six, residents of the Petah Tiqva area, were arrested in their homes, where police seized weapons and a small amount of drugs. They will appear in Kfar Sava's Magistrate's Court this morning for a remand hearing.

A week ago, three of Meshulam's supporters were remanded after they allegedly managed to penetrate the stringent security around Shahal's home, apparently intending to harm him.

Hefetz, who supervised the end of the Yehud siege in May 1994 and personally brought about the arrest of Meshulam after he tricked him into meeting him, also criticized the conditions under which the self-styled rabbi and his followers are being held in Ramla's Ayalon Prison.

There has been much controversy over what has been described as preferential treatment for Meshulam and his followers, who are jailed together in one special wing, apparently to "keep the peace." "They have created a virtual fortress inside the jail," Environment Minister Yosi Sarid said. "Meshulam gives sermons to his supporters over the telephone from his prison cell, and his supporters are trying to influence the state commission looking into the disappearance of Yemenite children in the 1950s," one source said.

Hefetz stressed that most of Meshulam's supporters are law-abiding citizens, but that "fringe elements" have no qualms about breaking the law, damaging property, and even endangering lives.

Peres Sets 4 Jun for Possible Early Elections

TA1201063596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0500 GMT 12 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said that if early elections are held for the Knesset and the prime minister, his target date would be 4 June. He made the remarks in a meeting with close Labor associates. Our party affairs correspondent Yaron Deqel

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has learned that the reason for choosing that date is the prime minister's wish that the second round of elections for prime minister be held prior to the summer vacations. Peres stressed that he is still undecided about early elections, but several participants in the meeting received the impression that he tends to support them.

Tzomet To Propose Early Elections 17 Jan

TA1501193896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Unrest is mounting this evening in the political establishment following Tzomet's decision to submit a draft bill on 17 January for disbanding the Knesset.

Our party affairs correspondent Yaron Deqel reports that the Likud plans to support the motion, although some members criticized the fact that Tzomet did not coordinate its moves with the opposition. Earlier, the directorate of the Third Way announced that Knesset Members Qahalani and Zismann would vote in favor of Tzomet's draft bill.

In view of these developments, Labor Secretary Nisim Zvili said this evening that he will recommend that Prime Minister Shim'on Peres support the bill for early elections on Wednesday [17 January]. At the same time, he explained that this was his personal position rather than that of the party.

Peres Orders Labor Vote Against Early Elections

TA1601055496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 16 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has ordered Labor to vote against the Tzomet proposal for early elections. The prime minister wants to wait before next month's scheduled visit by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher before making a final decision on bringing the elections forward. Qol Yisra'el's reporter says that if it transpires that Syria is ready to negotiate a peace treaty with Israel, Peres will continue with peace efforts and not bring forward the elections, which are scheduled to take place in October. A condition for this would be a Syrian agreement to raise the talks to the level of foreign minister. If Tzomet proposes early elections in the Knesset tomorrow and are defeated, opposition parties will not be able to table a similar motion for another six months.

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Iraqi Press Condemned for Running al-Qadhdhafi Speech

JN1601101096 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 16 Jan 96 pp 20, 30

["Last Station" column by Salih al-Qallab: "Not Through al-Qadhdhafi's Voice]

[FBIS Translated Text] By retouching and publishing the new "masterpiece" of Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi—and the leader of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah has many masterpieces—in which he urged Iraqis in a speech last month to march to Jordan and strike at what he called the conspiracy against Iraq, our brothers rulers in Baghdad have shown that in the agony before death, they will cling to anything to save themselves from their inevitable fate.

Our brother rulers in Baghdad have every right to defend themselves. This is something normal, and they have the right to reject or accept any and all proposals to resolve the Iraqi crisis. However, what is unacceptable is for them to be thrilled with al-Qadhdhafi's "masterpiece" and decorate their newspaper headlines with his slander, from which they suffered so much over the past years.

It would have been possible to understand the gladness of our brother rulers in Baghdad over al-Qadhdhafi's call to attack Jordan had they not suffered bitterly from the missiles al-Qadhdhafi offered as gifts to the Iranians during the peak of the first Gulf war, which fell on Baghdad as heavy rain, causing horror and destruction in al-Waziriyah and al-Kazimiyah, and al-Rashid and al- Mansur streets.

Who is the one who conspires against Iraq? Is it the one who offered an opinion and did not insist on it, and who emphasized many times that this is not his own opinion and is not a plan to solve the aggravating crisis in Iraq, or is it the one who allowed his missiles to hit Baghdad, the capital of Arabs for generations, creating terror in its schools, mosques, streets, and squares? The question is not one of spite, and if our brother rulers in Baghdad want to convey an opinion to Jordan, this should not be through al-Qadhdhafi's slanders and abuses, especially since they were not spared these abuses over more than two decades, and they were hit by hundreds of missiles that the Libyan people paid for from the bread of their children. These missiles were fired from the Iranian trenches to hit one of most deep-rooted and most important Arab cities.

The brother rulers in Baghdad have the right to protest our policies toward them—and Amman opens its heart to them, we are their only gateway to the world—but they do not have the right to slander Jordan through al-Qadhdhafi's voice or to expose us to these masterpieces that al-Qadhdhafi used to make us and the world listen to from time to time.

Al-Kabariti: Prince Sa'ud Visit 'Successful'

LD1101160396 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 1430 GMT 11 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, Jordanian foreign affairs minister, has described the visit of His Royal Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, foreign affairs minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to Jordan as very successful and fruitful.

He said that the talks concentrated on envisaging a joint perception for laying down the foundations of bilateral relations between the two fraternal countries.

He added in a statement to AL-YAWM newspaper, published in today's issue, that Jordan's King Husayn had warmly received His Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, and entrusted him with carrying a message of congratulations and appreciation to King Fahd Bin-'Abd - al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques, and that King Husayn had praised the wise and leading role played by the Saudi leadership regarding all issues, in the forefront of which is Arab solidarity.

Al-Kabariti stated that the results of Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal's visit to Jordan will become apparent very soon, pointing out that it has been agreed to maintain the meetings at all the levels which have contributed toward consolidating the relations between the two countries and the two fraternal peoples.

'Highly Positive Results' of Sa'ud's Visit Viewed

JN1101175896 Amman AKHBAR AL-USBU' in Arabic 11 Jan 96 pp 1, 15

[FBIS Translated Text] The visit to Jordan by Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal has achieved highly positive results on the political and economic fronts.

Jordanian Foreign Ministry sources have said the working breakfast hosted in his honor by Jordanian Foreign Minister 'Abd-al- Karim al-Kabariti produced many positive results that will not be announced at present pending the emergence of propitious Arab and regional climates, especially with regard to inter-Arab reconciliation; Kuwait's joining in such a reconciliation; the consummation of the peace process to include the Arabian Gulf states; and the reconstruction of Arab communities in line with the Arab nation's goals, demands, and aspirations. This is meant to usher in an end to interference in the domestic affairs of Arab states.

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The sources asserted that Saudi assistance to Jordan and other developing nations will continue through the existing Saudi and Islamic institutions based in Saudi Arabia, which are granting developing nations, particularly Arab and Islamic countries, loans and grants in accordance with specific and recognized bases within the context of the new economic world order. Moreover, Saudi markets will be opened wide to Jordanian products and labor, but on the basis of Saudi Arabia's requirements for goods and expertise.

The sources added that Saudi Arabia requested that a specific timeframe in which to study Jordan's requests so that it may respond to them collectively with other Gulf Cooperation Council members. The aim is to make Saudi moves in this regard institutional, pivotal, everlasting, and indicative of a permanent strategy rather than transient tactics.

The sources went on to say that Saudi Arabia has granted Arab and Islamic states some $70 billion over the past two decades, and that it can grant them the same amount, but on the basis of new foundations requiring active participation. They maintained that Jordan will benefit from future Saudi assistance, particularly since it was the recipient of $5 billion in Saudi aid over the past two decades.

Prior to his departure from Amman, the Saudi minister said that his visit to Jordan was fruitful, good, and satisfactory to both sides. He added that he relayed a message from King Fahd, custodian of the two holy mosques, to his brother His Majesty King Husayn. He described as useful his talks with Jordanian officials. He noted that the talks were aimed at identifying the firmest foundations for bilateral ties and contacts. He reiterated that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia welcomes a visit to Saudi Arabia by His Majesty King Husayn, noting that the custodian of the two holy mosques has extended an invitation to King Husayn to visit Saudi Arabia.

Transport, Air Accords With Israel Endorsed

JN1301221596 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 13 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Council of Ministers held a meeting this evening chaired by Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin Shakir during which it approved the general transportation agreement and the air services agreement between Jordan and Israel, which consolidate economic cooperation between the two countries through developing all transportation fields and facilitating the transportation of travelers and goods through the crossings, land, railways, sea, and air passages.

More details in the following report: The first agreement stipulates the recognition of each party of the right of the travelers of the other party and their personal luggage, goods, and vehicles to transit entry to the territory of the other party and through that territory. Private cars registered in the two countries will be allowed to enter the other country in accordance with the legal procedures in the two countries. Temporary entry permits will be issued to these vehicles at the border crossings and the vehicles will have national plates that have English letters and numbers.

The licensed transportation agents in the tourism field are allowed to transport tourist groups in tourist buses between the two countries. The licensed transporters in the field of public transportation are allowed to carry travelers on the regular bus lines between the two countries on condition that these lines operate between specific points or between two main cities. This will be on the basis of an equal number of journeys for both parties.

The agreement also allows the transportation of goods overland by trucks between the two countries and as transit to a third country on the basis of exchange of transportation except for Jordanian trucks that enter directly to the Israeli ports to load or unload goods imported to Jordan or exported by Jordan, and Israeli trucks that enter directly to the port of al-'Aqabah to load or unload goods imported by Israel or exported by Israel.

The two sides also agreed to develop the two railway projects, and it was agreed to study the construction of two railways from Haifa to Irbid and al-Mafraq, and to link the Dead Sea potash plants in the two countries with the Mediterranean and the Red Sea ports through Wadi al-'Arabah.

In the field of shipping and ports, the agreement allows each side to use the ports of the other side in all services, including loading, unloading, transit services, and passenger services to save unnecessary costs.

The agreement also sanctions the transfer of the goods shipped to the ports of either of the two countries to the ports of the other country. It also grants ships bound to the Port of al-'Aqabah the right to head to the Port of Elat directly and vice versa.

In the field of civil aviation and air transport, the two sides agreed to use the al-'Aqabah Airport as an international airport for the two countries. The civil aviation authorities in the two countries will take the necessary measures to implement this provision within three months once this agreement takes effect.

The agreement also stipulates that the meteorological departments in the two countries will cooperate to exchange knowledge, expertise, and weather and rain ob-

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servations. The agreement states that a joint committee will be formed to supervise and monitor the implementation of this agreement with the understanding that this committee will alternately meet in the two countries once a year.

The bilateral air services agreement is a standard agreement modeled on the agreements signed by all other states. It contains the provisions usually enshrined in international conventions. It is modeled on the agreements Jordan has signed with several countries.

The agreement addresses the transport of goods between Jordan and the Palestinian Authority's territories on the basis of certain foundations, chief among which is the mutual transport of goods via the King Husayn Bridge onto Jordanian trucks, totaling 150, permanently operating on the western side of the bridge. These trucks will transport goods from the bridge directly to the territories under the authority's jurisdiction. Moreover, the agreement provides for the direct transport of oil and cement to the territories under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian National Authority by way of Jordanian trucks via the King Husayn Bridge. Moreover, it will be permissible to use Jordanian trucks to transport the imports and exports of the Palestinian Authority via the Port of al-'Aqabah.

The agreement specifies the fares of public transport by bus between the two countries and the number of daily trips.

Minister of Transport Samir Qa'war has stated that the Council of Ministers has approved all details of the Jordanian-Israeli transport agreement. He noted that the implementation of this agreement will begin one month after it is signed.

The minister of transport asserted that the signing of this agreement by the Jordanian and Israeli sides will take place before Thursday, and that an agreement will be reached with the Israeli side on the venue of the signing ceremony tomorrow.

King Addresses Israeli Delegation on Peace

JN1501191996 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 15 Jan 96

[Kassab Samawi report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] His Majesty King Husayn has said he is confident that the tangible results achieved on the path of peace between Jordan and Israel must serve as an example for others. He said: What we have achieved and will achieve together will be within the context of comprehensive peace in the region.

During his reception at Basman Palace this evening of a delegation representing the heads of local labor councils in 81 Israeli towns and villages — who also represent the general workers federation, the Histadrut — His Majesty King Husayn said: We are building together a peace between our two peoples; a warm peace that gives us hope for the future and that provides an opportunity for the coming generations to live and enjoy what we have been denied for several decades.

[Begin Husayn recording, in English] May I thank you very sincerely for your warm words and feelings. And may I say how happy I am to welcome our friends here today. I hope that this meeting will be followed by many visits to our country in the future and I hope that the remainder of your visit will be a pleasant one, that you will feel at home and amongst your friends. As I understand, you are travelling south. I hope that the weather is kind. We are expecting some rain and snows in the period ahead, at least so the forecasters tell us. And I know that in both countries we are always happy when we have that kind of weather, and in any event. But I am sure that it will be for you kind in terms of the remainder of your visit. I hope that you will enjoy Petra and you will enjoy the south and you will come again in the future and see us.

I would like to say how happy I am with the fact that our efforts are producing tangible results. It's not a question of myself or the government or the view of the few. But what we are building together is a peace between our peoples, a warm peace, a peace that gives us hope for the future, that gives the opportunities for our coming generations to live and enjoy something that maybe many of us have been denied for whatever has been our life up to now.

And I am confident that our relations will be an example to others. And we hope that whatever we have achieved or will achieve will be within the context of a comprehensive peace in this region and that the descendants of the children of Abraham will enjoy peace amongst themselves and the opportunities to build together and to excel and to achieve what is their right. I am confident that this will be the case in the coming period. I am very very (?proud of) what has been achieved so far. I can only reemphasize that we are totally committed to this course. Totally committed to giving generations to come opportunities we never had. Totally committed to their cause and their rights in the times to come.

And in any event as far as we are concerned in the next few days, the very few agreements remaining, which had been approved, will be ratified and the papers will be exchanged in the south, hopefully on the 18th of

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this month. That concludes the agenda of all that we set out to try to achieve when we embarked on our joint effort towards a bright dawn that has broken already, and hopefully will bring light to this entire region in the context of a comprehensive peace.

I feel that now that we have reached this phase, we need to do more to ensure that people feel more and more the dividends of peace and the opportunities that it presents in the times ahead. From a time when we were concentrating on peace making, we are now concentrating on building in the times ahead, and with peace, the future that is right for all our peoples. And I believe that the barriers have come down, the walls are coming down more and more, and all of us can see on both sides the human face of the other which we were denied for so long in the past. I think with it comes a very pleasant realization that our objectives and aims and hopes are one and the same, the challenges we face, the fears we have, the concerns we have. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to put it all together, God willing, in a real and meaningful way.

I know of your involvement with the economic and social dimension over so many years in your country, and I am sure that, in the future, many of our people who are striving to attain a bright and happy future for themselves and those who will follow them will look upon your experience and regard it with great interest, and I hope that all our young people will come together to build and construct the future that is worthy of all of us. Yes, I will definitely always regard the loss of the late prime minister Rabin as a personal loss, for he was a man of great courage, of wisdom, of commitment, and he was my partner in bringing about the peace between our peoples and our countries. But, his loss will only make us more determined in the times ahead to ensure that nothing will stand in our way while we struggle to achieve peace between our peoples, struggle in the face of all forces that would try to stop us from achieving that worthy objective of life, of human dignity, of human security, of human rights, to live free from fear, suspicion, complexes, to live openly, to live together and to build together, and I will definitely regard the period ahead as a period of challenge.

This relationship, this peace has to be an example of what peace can be and should be, and I am sure that I will be continuing to work with my friend, Prime Minister Peres in the times ahead to ensure that rapid progress is made on our part to secure the comprehensive peace that is so dear to us.

I would like to welcome you, and to thank you very, very much, indeed for coming to see me, and I hope you will feel at home and amongst your friends, and I certainly have come back from a visit to your country, an official visit, a short visit at that, but one which was so rich in terms of the warmth with which we were received, and it will always be rich in terms of the memories that I will always treasure for all the times to come.

I welcome you all and may God's peace and blessings be upon you [preceding sentence in Arabic] [applause] [end recording]

Beni Shomer, chairman of the local labor council federation and head of the delegation, delivered a speech at the outset of the meeting in which he expressed the delegations pleasure to meet with His Majesty King Husayn. He praised his majesty's wise leadership and his pioneer and brave role in achieving peace.

[Begin Shomer recording, in English] Your Majesty, we are honored to be here today. We are grateful that you have and you find some time to meet us. We know that you are very busy and we are grateful for it.

This delegation are include about 80 representatives — local leaders, chairmens of labor councils in Israel that belong to the Histadrut. The Histadrut is the largest organization that represents the workers in Israel. This delegation include Jews, Muslims, Christians, and Druze from all over the country. These leaders are public opinions that have influential and very influential in their towns. The people that are sitting here supports the peace process and will support the peace process. We hope that we will be, like in the past, the people that will try to convince the Israeli population of the importance of the peace process for the future.

The Histadrut, as you know your majesty, is take or play a very, a very important task in Israel in the economic and social field. [sentence as heard] For about 75 years the Histadrut exist. And as a Histadrut and all the workers in Israel, we are also supporting all the peace process that the government, this government, the Labor government is considered to do in its policy.

Like everyone, we saw your visits in Israel and I think that you felt also that your last visit in Israel touched the Israeli population. I think that the Israeli population shows you their admiration to your courage, wisdom, by leading the peace process with our late leader prime minister Rabin. This tragedy that happened we are sure will not stop the peace process. We are sure that together with our Prime Minister Peres, you will continue the peace process till we'll come to a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The peace process is very important for us. The Histadrut in the last year established a special desk that deals with connections with Arab countries. The representative and the head of this desk

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is sitting here, Avital [name as transliterated]. And we are emphasizing the connections with Jordan. We are seeing, as an organization that represent workers in Israel, that the peace process will bring also an economic prosperity; economic prosperity that is, first of all, good for the workers all over this area. And of course, the peace process for us is an horizon and the hope for the young generation.

We hope that you, as you are going now in the way of peace with other countries, will try together with our leaders to influence other countries to make peace with us. We wish you and your people that all of us will live in peace in the future. And we hope that this visit will not be — it is only first step for us to strength the connections with you, with the workers of, and the Jordanian people, and, of course, with the Jordanian trade unions. And we hope that you will support this process. We wish you good luck and God will bless you. Salam and Shalom [Arabic and Hebrew for peace] [end recording]

Mr. Shomer presented His Majesty King Husayn with a symbolic gift represented by a painting of Jerusalem. At the end of the meeting, which was attended by Marwan al-Qasim, chief of the Royal Hashemite Court, and His Majesty King Husayn's adviser, his majesty shook hands with members of the delegation, who expressed their appreciation of his noble stands and brave and wise policy.

The delegation representing labor councils in Israel arrived in Amman yesterday Sunday via Shaykh Husayn Bridge on visit that will last several days, during which it will visit a number of cultural and touristic sites in the kingdom.

Party Criticizes Palestinian Elections, Yemen

JN1501114596 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 15 Jan 96 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] The Jordanian Arab Socialist Ba'th Party called on the Arab masses in general, and the Palestinian people in particular, to expose the farce of the upcoming Palestinian elections, describing them as part of a Zionist and U.S. conspiracy aimed at liquidating the Palestinian cause in cooperation with the self-rule authorities, who are known for curbing the Palestinian people's ambitions to liberate their land and to restore their rights.

In a statement, the party said that everyone, whether inside the occupied Palestinian territories or abroad, is aware of the real reason behind the redeployment of the Zionist forces. They withdrew from the densely populated Arab cities to get rid of the heavy burdens they had to shoulder there, but kept all the surrounding territories. They have even seized more Palestinian lands and opened roads to facilitate their movement and interference at any time and whenever necessary. They also allowed the self-rule authority to act on their behalf in repressing and pursuing those resisting the Zionist schemes.

The statement added: The fact that the self-rule authority itself prepared the list of candidates, opposed and placed obstacles in the face of independent candidates, and launched large-scale arrest campaigns, reveals the reality of these elections, which are meant to be in line with the authority's pledge to cancel the Palestinian National Charter, from which it derives its legitimacy, as a prelude to legitimizing a further relinquishment of the Palestinian people's rights and abortion of their revolution and aspirations.

The statement said that the self-rule elections have now been exposed as a farce that is rejected by all the people except the few opportunists. The statement called for foiling all the conspiracies aimed at forging the will of the Palestinian masses.

In another statement, the party criticized the Yemeni Government's acceptance of international mediation to settle the dispute over the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir by parties known for their links with the U.S. schemes. The statement said this will lead to internationalizing the issue and will serve the U.S. and Israeli interests. The statement commended the Yemeni parliament, which held the government accountable for any negligence, failure, or relinquishment of any part of the Yemeni territories. It demanded an immediate investigation into the reasons behind the fall of the island in the hands of the Eritrean aggressors with overt help from Israel, and called for naming those responsible for this negligence.

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Syria's al-Shar' Arrives With al-Asad Message

NC1501101896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1000 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' arrived on the Lebanese-Syrian border at 1100 today. He was received by Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz. The Syrian minister said he would convey a message from President al-Asad to President al-Hirawi. He added that the message deals with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit to the region and the two rounds of talks held between the Syrian and Israeli sides in Washington.

Buwayz and al-Shar' then left for Beirut.

Meets With President al-Hirawi

JN1501143896 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi received [Syrian] Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' at B'abda Palace this morning. The meeting was attended by Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri, Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, and Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz.

Al-Shar' arrived in Beirut this morning on a visit to Lebanon carrying a message from President Hafiz al-Asad to his brother Ilyas al-Hirawi dealing with the recent developments of the peace process and the results of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's recent visit to Damascus.

Al-Shar' was welcomed at the Syrian-Lebanese border post by Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz and some senior Lebanese Foreign Ministry officials.

Views Christopher Talks, Peace Process

NC1501150296 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Our correspondent at the Presidential Palace Ahmad 'Izz-al-Din reports:

President Ilyas al-Hirawi, Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri, Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', and Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz proceeded a short while ago to a banquet hosted by President al-Hirawi. Before the banquet, al-Shar' said that he delivered a message from Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad to President Ilyas al-Hirawi on the new developments in the peace process, the talks between the Syrian and Israeli delegations in Maryland, and the results of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour of the region.

Al-Shar' said that the atmosphere of the talks with Secretary of State Christopher was good and amicable. He stressed that there is nothing new regarding south Lebanon. He said that the Lebanese and Syrian stances are well known: Both the Syrian and Lebanese tracks proceed in tandem and are linked. He said that there can be no substantial progress on the Syrian track before movement on the Lebanese track, because the Lebanese track will move automatically. He noted that the negotiations were positive and he refused to link the negotiations to the Israeli elections, be they early elections or on time. He noted that the issue of early elections in Israel was not broached during the talks with Secretary of State Christopher. He said that this is a domestic Israeli affair. Minister al-Shar' said:

[Begin recording] [al-Shar'] As part of the continuqus consultation and coordination between the Syrian and Lebanese leaders, I conveyed to His Excellency President Ilyas al-Hirawi a message from President Hafiz al-Asad. Prime Minister Rafiq al- Hariri and Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz were present. This message deals with the new developments in the peace process, the results of the meetings between the Syrian and Israeli delegations in Maryland—near Washington—last month, and the talks U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher held in Damascus and his meeting with President Hafiz al-Asad. You may ask your brief questions.

[Indistinct question]

[Al-Shar'] The atmosphere of talks with U.S. Secretary of State Christopher was good and the talks were held in a friendly atmosphere. There was complete understanding of the importance of making an achievement in the peace process on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks during 1996. We also discussed the components, elements, and requirements of peace. Secretary Christopher made a statement in Damascus expressing his satisfaction with his meeting with President Hafiz al-Asad. A statement released by Syria noted that the talks were positive and constructive, that the peace process will move forward, and that Syria is serious about making an effective contribution along with the United States and will do all that can be done to achieve a comprehensive and fair peace in the region.

[Indistinct question]

[Al-Shar'] There is nothing new regarding south Lebanon. Lebanon's and Syria's stance is well known: As I said, the Syrian and Lebanese tracks move in tandem and are linked. Syria will not sign an agreement before Lebanon, and Lebanon will not sign a peace agreement before Syria. This means that the peace process will make progress in the next few months if the Israeli party is serious and complies with the

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principles of the peace process on both the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

[Indistinct question]

[Al-Shar'] Early elections in Israel is an Israeli affair. Secretary Christopher did not mention the Israeli elections, whether early or on time, to us. We believe that the U.S. party, in its capacity as sponsor of the peace process, is serious about expediting the peace process and activating the talks between the Syrian and Israeli parties. I believe that this serious approach is one of the United States' priorities and interests. The Israeli party, particularly Prime Minister Peres, stated that he gives priority to peace rather than the elections. Anyway, we believe that there is no link between the Israeli elections and the peace process. In our view, real progress in the peace process will reflect positively on all parties.

[Indistinct question]

[Al-Shar'] Of course, Lebanon, as I said during my previous visit to Beirut, will negotiate on its own and no party other than Lebanon and the Lebanese Government can negotiate for Lebanon. Naturally, we miss no opportunity to stress our absolute support for Lebanon in our talks on the bilateral level with other countries or in Arab meetings, such as the Damascus Declaration countries meeting. The Damascus Declaration countries released a statement stressing the importance of achieving a fair and comprehensive peace in the region, that the Lebanese and Syrian tracks proceed in tandem, and that there is a need to implement Security Council Resolution 425 and bring about a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights and south Lebanon. [end recording]

'Resistance' Claims Attacks on Israeli Positions

NC1401065196 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Resistance has announced that martyr Yahya 'Ayyash group launched an attack on the Hula-Mash'arun-al-Qantarah position at 0635 today, inflicting casualties on the enemy ranks. A number of the position's fortifications have been destroyed.

Elsewhere, other Islamic Resistance groups attacked the enemy positions in Bayt Yahun, Haddathah, and Bra'shit. The Islamic Resistance pledges to martyr 'Ayyash and the oppressed Palestinian people that it will avenge the martyrs' blood.

Israeli Shelling, 'Resistance' Attack Reported

NC1401180796 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli forces fiercely shelled towns in the central sector and in al-Nabatiyah late this afternoon. Later the shelling became intermittent. Qabrikha, Tulin, Majdal Silm, the Litani River basin, Wadi al-Saluqi, Wadi al-Hujayr, the outer parts of Yahmur, and Kafr Tabnit came under fierce heavy-caliber artillery shelling from the Israeli positions in al-Zaffatah. Phosphorous shells were also used.

The Resistance retaliated by attacking the posts of 'Alman and al-Shumariyah using rocket-propelled grenades. In the afternoon, Israeli aircraft flew over Qal'at al-Shaqif, Mazra'at al-Hamra', and the Litani River basin. The outskirts of Habbush, al-Wadi al-Akhdar, and al-Jabal al-Rafi' in Iqlim al-Tuffah came under sporadic artillery shelling originating from the Israeli positions in al- Zaffatah. At noon, Israeli warplanes flew over the south up to Ba'labakk, and they broke the sound barrier over Beirut in the afternoon.

Fighting Reported Between 'Resistance,' Israelis

NC1401202296 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 2000 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Resistance attacked the al-Dabshah and 'Ali al-Tahir posts this evening. Fighting is continuing between the Resistance fighters and the occupation forces.

According to correspondents, the Israelis shelled Qa'qa'iyat al-Jisr, Zawtar al-Sharqiyah, Zawtar al-Gharbiyah, the al-Litani River Basin, the periphery of Kafr Tibnit, Arnun, Yuhmur, Wadi al-Saluqi, Qabrikah, and Tulin.

Additionally Bra'shit and Wadi al-Hujayr came under sporadic bombardment from the occupation forces' posts outside al-Tayyibah this evening.

Earlier the outskirts of Habbush, al-Wadi al-Akhdar, and Jabal al-Rafi' in Iqlim al-Tuffah were the targets of intermittent shelling.

Israeli helicopters overflew Qal'at al-Shaqif, Arnun, 'Alman, Haddathah, Bra'shit, Hula, Markaba, Tallusah, Haris, 'Ayta al-Jabal, Muhaybib, and Mazra'at al-Hamra'.

Israeli Shelling, Amal Retaliation Reported

NC1501173196 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli forces have continued their acts of aggression against villages in south

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Lebanon. They bombarded the al-Shaqif castle and the outskirts of Yuhmur and Arnun. The Israeli shelling yesterday and today caused damage to homes and property. The technical inspection committees in the Council of the South proceeded to al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa this morning and inspected the damage to homes.

The Amal Movement issued a statement today saying that its fighters retaliated for yesterday's assaults by attacking the al- Dabshah and 'Ali al-Tahir posts, inflicting a number of losses in the enemy ranks.

The Resistance also released a statement today saying that in reprisal for the Israeli bombardment, its fighters detonated an explosive charge near an agent [South Lebanese Army] militia foot patrol on the al-Tiri-Bra'shit road, seriously wounding a soldier.

Islamic Resistance Operations Detailed

NC1601070396 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 16 Jan 96

[Report by correspondent Samir 'Alami from Tyre—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The occupation forces and their Lahdist Agents [South Lebanese Army] have resumed their oppressive and terrorist actions against our steadfast kin in the occupied zone. The occupation forces are continuing their siege of Yarun because residents are refusing to have their sons recruited in the Agent militia. [passage omitted]

The Islamic Resistance dealt blows to the occupation forces and Agents yesterday. After monitoring the enemy's troop concentrations in Sujud and B'ir Kallab, the group of martyr 'Ami Marmar attacked the two positions with the appropriate weapons, scoring direct hits at 1630 yesterday. Elsewhere, the group of martyrs 'Ali Sabra and 'Ali Sha'ban detonated an explosive charge as an Agent infantry patrol was passing in al-Tiri yesterday. Several members of the patrol were killed or wounded. [passage omitted]

Shortly after 0600 today, the enemy naval forces opened machine- gun fire on fishermen off the al-Qulaylah coast, south of Tyre.

Israelis Shell Areas in South

NC1601131696 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1215 GMT 16 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli forces shelled the Iqlim al-Tuffah hills, concentrating on al-Jabal al-Rafi', the outskirts of Habbush, 'Arab Salim, and Mazra'at al-Hamra' this morning. Earlier Israeli shelling targeted Haddatha, Bra'shit, Haris, Shaqra, and Wadi al-Saluqi.

Elsewhere, Israeli gunboats directed machine-gun fire at fishing boats off the al-Qulaylah coast this morning.

Sagger Missile Fired at SLA Patrol; No Casualties

NC1601152596 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 1430 GMT 16 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Terrorists fired a Sagger missile at a South Lebanese Army [SLA] patrol on the road leading to the Bayt Yahun crossing point this afternoon. The vehicle was hit but there were no casualties. The SLA and Israeli artillery returned fire at the source.

Hizballah Official Underlines 'Resistance' Goal

NC1401075496 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Deputy Muhammad Ra'd, head of Hizballah's political council, has reiterated that the United States has been endeavoring to make the Zionist entity the focus of the region. Therefore, resistance must remain the main factor of our strength to uphold the rights of the Muslims and Arabs, Deputy Ra'd added.

Deputy Ra'd maintained that the enemy's attempts to speed up the negotiations are due to the enemy's realization that the era of military invasions to impose one's political will has gone for ever.

Six Arrested in Shaykh al-Halabi Assassination

NC1601094196 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A responsible judicial source has disclosed that six more people have been apprehended in the case of the assassination of Shaykh Nizar al-Halabi. Four of these are close aides to Abu-Mihjan and have extremely important information. The fifth, Muhammad 'Ali 'Ablah, was interrogated by the investigating judge 'Abdallah Bitar. He is accused of keeping the weapons in his home before the crime was committed. He received weapons training and did not know that the group assassinated shaykh al-Halabi.

The judge also interrogated Tariq Isma'il, who gave the pistol used in the crime to Munir 'Abbud. He received training from Fatah and used to call for Islamic jihad.

Judge Bitar will interrogate the other four detainees tomorrow.

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Christopher, al-Asad Discuss Peace Process

JN1201120396 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1115 GMT 12 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher at the People's Palace at 1145 today. Christopher is accompanied by Dennis Ross, U.S. coordinator of the peace process; Christopher Ross, the U.S. ambassador in Damascus; and Mark Parris, the U.S. President's special assistant and director of Near East and South Asia Affairs at the U.S. National Security Council. The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and the Syrian delegation to the peace talks, comprising Walid al-Mu'allim, Dr. Mikha'il Wahbah, and Dr. Riyad al-Dawudi.

Hold Closed Meeting

JN1201163796 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1615 GMT 12 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad received U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher at the People's Palace at 1145 today. [passage omitted]

At the end of the expanded meeting, a closed meeting was held between his excellency the president and Secretary Christopher. The talks dealt with the peace process and the results of the two rounds of talks held on the Syrian-Israeli track in the United States. They agreed to resume talks between the Syrian and Israeli delegations in the presence of the U.S. sponsor in the United States on 24 January. A military expert will join each delegation to assist in issues pertinent to the security arrangements.

Secretary Christopher expressed satisfaction with his talks during his current tour. He will return to the region following the upcoming talks in the United States to assess the results of those talks.

SANA Reports Christopher News Conference

JN1201180296 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1705 GMT 12 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 12 Jan (SANA) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher held a new conference this afternoon following his talks with His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad. The news conference was attended by correspondents of Arab and foreign new agencies, world television networks, a number of journalists and media representatives, and the media delegation accompanying Christopher.

At the beginning of the news conference, Christopher said: I had a fruitful and important four-hour meeting with President Hafiz al- Asad. He added: In my last visit, I said that I will return to the region after the completion of the Maryland talks to discuss the talks with the concerned parties and to discuss the upcoming steps. This is what I did during this tour.

He went on to say: Clearly, the talks that were held at the conferences building in Maryland have ushered in a new stage of talks between the two sides and laid down a new foundation for real progress.

Christopher summed up the results of the talks he held in Damascus today and earlier in Israel by saying: We have worked out a new, effective mechanism for the talks in order to accelerate the peace process. This mechanism provides for holding extensive and direct talks which began in the conferences' building in Maryland. In my visit to the region, I seek to hold further talks with President Hafiz al-Asad and Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres.

He noted that in the meantime, this mechanism seems very effective for moving forward. To this end, it was agreed to resume the Maryland talks on 24 January. He said that the talks will last for a period equal to that of the previous talks.

He added: The two parties have felt that the unofficial atmosphere of the talks in Maryland has helped draw up a new practical approach to resolve problems between the two sides.

It was agreed to expand the two main work teams to include suitable experts in accordance with the need to make the negotiations more effective.

Christopher also said: Military experts from both sides will join the next talks that will be held on 24 January in order to assist in the subject of security arrangements.

He said: I will follow the talks very closely, and I may participate in part of the talks as we did in the previous talks. He also said it is likely that he will tour the region again after the next negotiations in order to discuss the next steps with the concerned parties.

Christopher said: I have repeatedly stated that I will not reveal the substance of the negotiations, and I am committed to this because this will benefit the nature of the negotiations. However, it is appropriate to say that Syria and Israel have become aware that permanent peace should be comprehensive in nature, and that both of them believe that a peace agreement between them will end the conflict between Israel and the Arab countries and will broaden the peace horizon.

Christopher said: The two sides agreed that it is important for them and for the United States to recruit support

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for the agreement when it is reached, whether on the regional level or from abroad.

He added: I believe that we are passing through an important stage in these talks, but I do not want to underestimate the size of challenges and difficulties facing us; it is clear that there is much work to be done. At the same time, I believe that the two sides are determined to complete this work, and the United States is definitely determined to assist them. President Clinton and I will continue to do all we can to reach an agreement between the two sides before the end of this year.

Asked if there is progress concerning the final goals of the peace process in terms of Israel's readiness to declare withdrawal from the Golan as Syria demands as well as the nature of the peace, Mr. Christopher said: Although I do not like to delve into the substance of the talks, I say that progress has been made, that the talks were of a substantive nature in which difficult issues were discussed. Christopher added: As I have said, I believe the two sides have reached an understanding on the importance of comprehensiveness. This means reaching an agreement that will definitely expand the circle of peace in the region.

Asked about the powers of the Syrian delegation, Christopher said: I am satisfied because the negotiators enjoy the confidence of their leadership and they have the powers that are in line with the nature of the talks. He added: While we moved successively from one step to the next in the Maryland talks, it was obvious that the negotiators should have wider powers to discuss new issues in the same way. It is realistic to say that each of the two sides reserved for themselves the right to give its final judgment on these issues.

Christopher voiced his relief that the given powers are in line with the nature of the negotiations. He said: In fact the negotiators on both sides enjoy the trust of their leadership and have the appropriate powers.

Asked about the timetable of the talks, he said: I believe that both sides realize the need for acceleration and for momentum. Both are aware of the issue of the timetable. Therefore, the method we are following through the Maryland talks and our tours of the region show that the talks have entered a new phase and have a fresh momentum.

Asked again if Israel has finally agreed to a comprehensive withdrawal from the Syrian Golan Heights to the 4 June 1967 lines in implementation of International legitimate resolutions, Christopher said: I do not want to discuss the substance of the talks because the withdrawal issue is one of the four elements that are being intensively discussed by the parties.

Asked if the chiefs of staff will return to the negotiations, Christopher said that he expects that the military experts at this stage will be on a lower level than that of chiefs of staff, but that there will be military experts who will enjoy the confidence of their leadership.

Radio Warns Against 'Excessive Optimism' in Wye Talks

JN1501173496 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1237 GMT 15 Jan 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Although the return to Maryland on 24 January for a third round of negotiations between the Syrian and Israeli delegations calls for optimism, it does not give room for excessive optimism as long as there are difficulties and challenges as was announced by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher at a news conference held in Damascus following his meeting with President Hafiz al-Asad.

With much simplification of the real meaning of the difficulties and challenges the U.S. secretary of state indicated, in brief, it can be said that obstacles still exist. These obstacles are impeding the peace process and preventing acceleration toward the aspired objective.

Perhaps, the major obstacle — from which several obstacles spring — is Israel's occupation of the Golan Heights and lack of clarity regarding the extent of its readiness for full and comprehensive withdrawal from every inch of the occupied territories and for pulling back to the 4 June 1967 borders, and also regarding Israel's acceptance of equitable [al-mutakafi'ah] and even [al-muta'adilah] security arrangements on both sides of these borders.

No doubt, the removal of this obstacle will necessarily be followed by the removal of other obstacles impeding the peace process. Removal of the major obstacle will certainly remove other obstacles. It is an indisputable fact that a crisis cannot be resolved by circumventing the reasons behind it, and that any conflict between two parties cannot be terminated before the reasons and motives for it are removed.

We do not believe that the reason behind the Arab-Israeli conflict is unknown. This reason was ignored by some at a certain time. However, that time is now history, and this reason can no longer be ignored if peace is to be achieved in the region and if peaceful coexistence is to be established among its peoples.

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If Israel really wants peace, as frequently stated by its prime minister, and if it sees Syria as the key to peace, then Israel must realize that the door to peace with Syria can only be opened with the real key, which is full withdrawal from the Golan Heights and implementation of the international legitimacy resolutions, particularly Resolutions 242 and 338, and the U.S. initiative which calls for exchanging land for peace.

In any case, hope remains contingent on the positivity of the Israeli position on the substance of the peace process. The future of the peace process depends on Israel's seriousness in dealing with this process. The coming round of talks in Maryland should supposedly go beyond the limits of exploration and beyond the external appearance of the new Israeli tone. These talks should delve deeply into the implications of Israel's recent utterances and their real meanings in order to show that this new tone does not amount to mere hollow words that lack a genuine desire for translating them into reality on the ground.

If there is a precursor for the growing hope of establishing a real, comprehensive, and just peace, it is undoubtedly the U.S. Administration's apparent interest in making a serious and effective contribution to the removal of obstacles impeding the peace process, so this process can move forward without obstruction.

We believe that the distinguished relations between the United States and Israel can prompt the United States to convince Israel of the need to implement the land-for-peace principle and respect the international community's will, and not to violate the international consensus. That is, if Israel is really interested in being a member of the international community.

Press on Peace Talks Resumption, Syrian Stand

JN1401100396 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0557 GMT 14 Jan 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial, the newspaper AL-THAWRAH discusses the peace talks which will resume on 24 January. The paper says: Political observers and the media have received with extreme satisfaction the announcement on resuming the Syrian-Israeli talks under U.S. sponsorship in Maryland on 24 January. Their reactions also expressed optimism over the possibility of achieving progress in these talks.

AL-THAWRAH believes that optimism alone does not mean success in circumventing the obstacles and bridging the gap. Optimism alone is not the effective mechanism for talks. Likewise, awareness of the importance of speeding up and intensifying the talks does not mean progress. This is so because achieving progress depends on positive positions on the substantive issues in accordance with the principles of the peace process and the Security Council resolutions. These principles are led by full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied southern Lebanon and the Golan and by discussing all objective issues related to peace.

AL-THAWRAH adds: Talks are supposed to enter a new phase which goes beyond the phase of exploration and of getting acquainted with the new political and media tone. What is required now are practical positions which achieve a tangible substantial progress accompanied by working out the required procedural methods in order to proceed with the talks toward their aspired objective — establishing a just and comprehensive peace. Such peace will ensure the full return of land and rights to their owners, secure the rights of all parties, guarantee the security of all and the stability of the region, and introduce a phase of prosperity to the region.

The paper asserts that a substantial progress depends on the extent of Israeli seriousness and readiness to fully withdrawal and to accept the reciprocal [al-mutabadalah] security commitments in accordance with the principles of justice, equality, and equitability [al-takafu'].

Concluding, AL-THAWRAH says: Syria is clear in its peaceful positions which seek the peace of the brave. It is also committed to the principle of full peace in exchange for full withdrawal, and is ready to fulfill the objective requirements of peace once it makes sure that its land and its national and pan-Arab rights are fully regained. Syria does not bargain over an iota of its soil or relinquish its sovereignty. It does not accept what undermines its full sovereignty over Syrian national soil.

In its editorial, the newspaper AL-BA'TH discusses the numerous Israeli statements which attractively focus on the unprecedented atmosphere of optimism. With the current visit to the region by the U.S. secretary of state, the Israeli propaganda machine has focused on awaiting the Syrian replies to the nature of peace.

AL-BA'TH says: We are not less optimistic than the Israelis and the Americans. This optimism resulted from what was proposed by the U.S. secretary of state during his previous round as well as the agreement during this visit on reviving the peace efforts. Optimism also resulted from what prevailed in the Maryland negotiations in terms of the Israeli readiness to proceed forward.

AL-BA'TH believes that optimism will lose its importance when it is extremely exaggerated and also when it is confined to words, expressions, and statements which

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are not coupled with deeds and which do not include a frank Israeli commitment to implementing the peace initiative and to withdrawing to the 4 June 1967 lines.

Concluding, AL-BA'TH says: The ball is still in the Israeli court. Syria will not go back on the opportunities it has provided or on the interest it has shown in achieving a just and comprehensive peace. Any proposals on the nature of peace and the time factor or any attempt to set preconditions will not be useful. This is so because peace is peace, and Syria's position is based on rights and justice.

In its editorial, the newspaper TISHRIN discusses Syria's active and prominent role. It says that in the past few days, Damascus received many official and parliamentary European, Asian, U.S., and Arab political figures.

The paper asserts that the visits to Syria by a number of prominent figures absolutely shows that Syria has a distinguished political weight as well as a clear policy in terms of its stand, its Arab and foreign relations, and its credible dealings.

TISHRIN adds: Attested by all, Syria has pioneering and honorable pan-Arab positions in defense of the Arabs' rights, existence, and real attitudes toward protecting the pan-Arab interest and promoting the status of the Arabs. While growing under its leader President Hafiz al-Asad, Syria—through our people's allegiance to, and rallying around, President al-Asad's historic leadership—is proving that national unity, the solid and strong internal front, and the leadership which believes in the people's potentials and in regaining their rights are the most powerful weapons to overcome challenges, remove difficulties, resolve problems, and find solutions based on the people's interests and aspirations.

TISHRIN notes that under President Hafiz al-Asad's leadership and with confidence in victory, Syria has confronted all pressures and is now an active state that influences events and developments.

Concluding, TISHRIN asserts that Syria's decision is sound, its policy is clear, and its positions are balanced and objective. In the Syrian positions, there is no ambiguity, concession, or bargaining over the issues of rights, justice, and legitimate laws. Hence, attention is focused on Syria whenever there is an event or development in the region. This is so because Syria couples words with deeds and can decide on things.

Papers: Christopher To Find 'Positive' Attitude

JN1201083296 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 12 Jan 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial today, AL-BA'TH says Syria has struggled in all arenas for a just and comprehensive peace, based on the principles of the peace process and the resolutions of international legitimacy. Syria wants a just and comprehensive peace and will continue to work honestly toward this end.

The newspaper adds: Everybody, particularly the U.S. sponsor, knows that Syria does not play games or maneuver. Syria is honest about the peace process. Peace is an irreversible strategic option for Syria. This has been the case all the time, and not since the resumption of talks at the Wye Plantation. Syria also played a key role in launching the peace process, opening doors for it, and resuming the talks on the Syrian track.

AL-BA'TH says the Israeli leaks to make some gains at the expense of Syria outside the context of the peace process and the resolutions of international legitimacy will not do good to the talks. We view such leaks as part of a war of words and belated attempts to create pressure. Syria will not be affected by such leaks. It also hopes that U.S. Secretary of State Christopher will not be affected by them in order for his current important tour to advance the peace process and achieve tangible progress toward a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

In one of its commentaries, AL-THAWRAH speaks about U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour of the region to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the outcome of the Maryland talks on the Syrian-Israeli track and lay the necessary foundations for launching them again.

The paper says: Damascus once again receives the U.S. secretary of state. It wishes him success in his mission to achieve progress that would advance the peace process in the right direction. The Maryland talks succeeded in ending the dormancy in the peace process, which was caused by Israel.

AL-THAWRAH adds: As always, Christopher will find in Damascus everything that is positive and that contributes to the success of his mission. The purpose of his mission is to achieve a true peace, based on the resolutions of international legitimacy and the U.S. initiative that stipulates full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon. Such success is not only dependent on Syria's important stance, but also

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on Israel's response to this mission and what Israel will offer to make it succeed, in terms of a frank commitment to the foundations of peace. The success of Christopher's mission also depends on how determined the United States is to play its role as a full partner and its fulfillment of its responsibilities toward this role by making Israel come closer to the foundations of real peace. This is especially true since Christopher said yesterday that he is confident about the honesty and seriousness of the Syrian stance.

The paper adds: Syria has spelled out a very clear position on peace, which is familiar to everyone. Syria will continue to respond to the foundations of the peace of international legitimacy and cooperate honestly with its efforts.

AL-THAWRAH concludes: While reasserting to the U.S. secretary its true desire for peace, Damascus reiterates its declared principles toward peace; namely, that it must be just and comprehensive. It must also fulfill all its requirements: full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan to the 4 June 1967 lines, setting up balanced [mutawazinah] and equitable [mutakafi'ah] security arrangements in everything on both sides of these borders, and implementing Security Council resolutions, which stipulate an unconditional Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon. Syria wants a peace that ends all manifestations of oppression and occupation, restores rights, and preserves the nation's dignity.

In another commentary, AL-THAWRAH says: Observers agree that the U.S. secretary of state's current tour is more important than previous tours. The paper welcomes this tour, saying: We welcome and appreciate U.S. efforts and stress our eagerness to continue to work with the United States to achieve a just and comprehensive peace. We, along with the whole world, are waiting for a serious attitude by the other side and an actual translation of this attitude on the ground, in implementation of the Madrid frame of reference and the foundations of peace.

AL-THAWRAH adds that when the Peres government makes up its mind, seeks guidance from international legitimacy, and complies with its resolutions, then peace will become a concrete reality and a strong guarantee of security and peace.

Peace Process 'Hostage' to 'Fickle Israeli Mindset'

JN1601114096 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0600 GMT 16 Jan 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "A Joint and Coordinated Stand," the newspaper TISHRIN says: In the context of ongoing coordination between Syrian and Lebanese leaders, Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' has relayed a message from His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad to Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi on developments in the peace process, the results of the Syrian-Israeli Maryland talks, and the outcome of the talks U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher held in Damascus, particularly with His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad.

The paper adds: This is indicative of Syria's strong eagerness to see the Syrian and Lebanese tracks proceed in tandem and remain inseparable. Al-Shar' underlined this when he said Syria would not sign a peace agreement before Lebanon does; nor would Lebanon sign a peace agreement before Syria. This affirmation shows the identity of views between Syria and Lebanon on the peace process. The inseparable nature of the two tracks is an asset to both Syria and Lebanon in their efforts to achieve a true, just, and comprehensive peace grounded in the relevant international legitimacy resolutions and complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon.

TISHRIN goes on to say: Despite Syria's interest in achieving peace, it must be said that the achievement of a breakthrough in the peace process requires a favorable Israeli response to the requirements and components of the peace process. Such a response must produce a practical willingness and an unmistakable commitment on Israel's part to implement the relevant international legitimacy resolutions, which are the key to a just and comprehensive peace in the region. The United States, in its capacity as a sponsor of the peace process, has indicated that it is serious in its efforts to accelerate and intensify the talks, and that it accords the talks a top priority.

TISHRIN stresses the need to build on the climate that prevailed during the Maryland talks, given the hopes it generated and the understanding it produced regarding the importance of achieving a breakthrough on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks in 1996, which Syria is endeavoring to realize, because the pursuit of peace has always been its strategic option.

TISHRIN concludes by saying: It is high time substantive and fundamental issues were addressed. The precious, new opportunity to put the region on the track of a comprehensive, balanced, and fair solution that would grant all parties what is lawfully theirs and usher in a new era of security and stability facilitated by Christopher's tour must not be wasted.

The newspaper AL-BA'TH says: Now that it has been announced that the talks will resume on 24 January, there is a good chance of ending the stalemate plaguing

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the peace process and proceeding along its path, which must produce a just and comprehensive peace based on the relevant UN resolutions and the principles of international legitimacy.

The paper adds: The success of this chance, however, is first and foremost contingent on an unmistakably clear and public Israeli commitment to the relevant international resolutions that provide for complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan Heights to the 4 June 1967 borders. Such a commitment would immensely boost the peace process and allow it to reach the stage of definitive decisions. Moreover, such a commitment would remove all the obstacles and difficulties standing in the way of the peace process, which have caused this process to move in a vicious circle of frustrations and failure.

The paper continues: Despite statements made by Israeli officials expressing their goodwill and desire to boost the peace process, Israel has thus far failed to make such a commitment. This means that the peace process will remain a hostage to the fickle Israeli mindset, which could wriggle out of any serious commitment to peace at any time. Syria has continued to pursue a firm and principled course on the peace process. It has repeatedly affirmed its commitment to the peace process, which must be grounded in the relevant international resolutions and the principle of exchanging territory for peace. Syria has been forthcoming and done its best to render the talks a success.

AL-BA'TH concludes by saying: The peace equation is very simple and clear. It is peace in exchange for territory. But it must be recalled that the sovereignty and sanctity of this territory should remain intact at present and in the future. When Israel decides to subscribe to such an equation, the success of the peace process will become inevitable. Once this happens, peace will be achieved in a record time; that is, in 1996. On the other hand, efforts to violate or circumvent this equation will only produce further difficulties and obstacles that will not be to anyone's advantage.

Press: Israel To Blame for 'Any Failure' in Talks

JN1501065996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0555 GMT 15 Jan 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "Axioms of Peace," TIHSRIN says in its editorial: During his meeting with the Dutch premier, President Hafiz al-Asad asserted that Syria is working for a just and comprehensive peace in the region on the basis of the resolutions of international legitimacy. President al-Asad urged Europeans to play a more active role in the peace process.

The newspaper adds: Through his meetings with many world leaders and officials, President al-Asad seeks to mobilize support for the peace process. He urged Europeans in particular to assume their responsibilities, given the historical ties between Europe and the Arab nation and the Europeans' understanding of the just Arab cause. Certainly, the Europeans are aware that the stumbling in the peace process so far is due to Israel's slow response to the conditions and requirements of a just peace, primarily full withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and recognition of the Arabs' inalienable rights.

TISHRIN adds that Syria's position is firm and principled, and not tactical at all. No one should think for a moment that Syria may relinquish a part of its territory, no matter how small, or give up any of its inalienable rights. The return of the territory and rights in full is a sine qua non for a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. A quick response by Israel to this requirement will achieve the objective conditions that are suitable for a breakthrough in the march of comprehensive peace.

The newspaper concludes: Syria worked on every occasion to provide the necessary atmosphere to invigorate the peace process. It also sought to mobilize international support for the peace process, out of its belief that achieving peace in an important region, like the Middle East, is an international responsibility that no one should abandon.

AL-BA'TH comments on statements by Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq to the effect that the peace talks on the Syrian track are advancing slowly. Baraq rejected withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied Golan to the 4 June 1967 lines. The paper asks: What has Israel offered to accelerate the peace talks and enable them to achieve their objectives? Has it announced its commitment to the principles and foundations of the peace process? Has it said that it is willing to implement all requirements for a true peace in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy? These resolutions stipulate full withdrawal from the occupied Golan to the 4 June 1967 lines, and from southern Lebanon, in accordance with Resolution 425.

AL-BA'TH adds: Nothing of this has happened. Israeli officials say one thing and do another. Such policy contradicts efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region. Syria clearly said that it is fully committed to the foundations, principles, and requirements of a just and comprehensive peace. Syria offered

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full peace in return for full withdrawal. This is more than enough to prove Syria's goodwill toward peace. We say what we believe in and seek to achieve. We said that a just and comprehensive peace is our strategic option. The whole world has ascertained this position.

The paper concludes that Israel is to blame for wasting time and is, therefore, responsible for any failure in the Maryland talks. Syria can never accept any peace that is not based on the resolutions of international legitimacy and the land-for-peace principle.

Radio: No Peace Unless Withdrawal to 4 Jun Border

JN1401175496 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 14 Jan 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Statements made by some Israelis, especially those who decline to be named, indicate that Israel was expecting from Warren Christopher's 'our more than it actually yielded. These statements also indicate that the coming period of elections will be more difficult and demanding for the Israelis than Christopher's recent tour and its results. Suddenly, the Israelis have become concerned about the time element after they wasted four years of the region's time to no avail. Not a single envoy was able to get any Israeli official to express Israel's full willingness to achieve a just and comprehensive peace or to withdraw from the occupied territories.

Although the Israelis have not so far offered the prerequisites for achieving real progress in the peace process or anything that might bring peace closer to the timeframe they are so concerned about, they imply that the new results Christopher has achieved are less than what they required. It is as if they are so eager to achieve peace that they are ready to offer the requirements of peace unconditionally.

The simplest bases of the peace process is the announcement of a full withdrawal from the occupied Golan and southern Lebanon and a commitment to implementing the resolutions of international legitimacy. However, it is becoming clearer by the day that the Israeli officials do not intend to respond to these bases. They do not want even to hint as to the size or depth of the withdrawal they envisage. Until now, the Israeli officials are adhering to Yitzhaq Rabin's formula of linking withdrawal to the scope of peace. They are forgetting that withdrawal is the more important part of the peace process, that it is stipulated in the resolutions of international legitimacy, and that it is the basic prelude to peace. The scope of peace, however, is commensurate with its requirements. The resolutions of international legitimacy did not mention this.

Hence, the Israelis are bypassing a basic prelude to peace and confusing matters before the region realizes peace and before the people become familiar with the anticipated peace, its nature, circumstances, and perpetuity, and above all, before they become familiar with the intentions of the occupier and aggressor who continues to occupy the land and usurp rights.

Those who propagate moving closer to peace, want to give the impression that Syria is the one that is far from peace and that others are closer to it. This is despite the fact that Syria is at the heart of the peace process. In order to render the peace process a success and push it forward, Syria offered a series of ideas and initiatives known to James Baker, former U.S. Secretary of State; and Warren Christopher, current U.S. Secretary, and other officials in the U.S. Administration and the administrations of the entire world. Meanwhile, Israel remains outside the circle of real peace and outside the provisions and resolutions of international legitimacy. Indeed, Israel is deliberately undermining and distorting these resolutions. It is also leveling false accusations against these resolutions with aim of holding on to the land and imposing its hegemony on the region away from the essence of peace and its long-term strategic objectives.

The fact which we are not tired of repeating regardless of circumstances, is that there can be no peace in any form or model unless Israel withdraws from the Golan to the 4 June 1967 borders and from southern Lebanon. Only then can the Israelis start measuring time.

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Afghanistan

Taleban Insists Government Reveal Agenda Before Talks

LD1101152996 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 11 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A Taleban spokesman has once again reiterated conditions for talks with the Kabul coalition administration. The Kabul administration, prior to the discussions, must reveal the agenda for the talks.

This point was made at a time when the Kabul coalition administration released a report on the visit to Kandahar by a Kabul delegation.

In an interview last night, Taleban spokesman Masum Afghan said: If the Kabul administration is intending to hold talks with us and to send a delegation to Kandahar then they must reveal to us the agenda for talks. No Kabul delegation will be allowed to arrive in Kandahar without accepting our conditions.

The Taleban spokesman denied a report released in Kabul saying that Sediq Chakari [minister of border affairs] and Dr. Abdorrahman [minister of civil aviation] have already gone to Kandahar for talks.

Rabbani Repeats Offer To Meet With Opposition

LD1101191696 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1630 GMT 11 Jan 96

[Speech by President Borhanoddin Rabbani at a meeting of religious scholars and teachers on 10 January; place not given — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. [passage omitted] Esteemed brethren and sisters, teachers and esteemed [words indistinct]: I am glad to take part in your glorious gathering. [passage omitted]

I would like to mention the difficulties facing our country at the present time. The policy of your Islamic state, from the beginning up to now, was and is a policy to restore security and peace in the country. Our message to those who embark on fighting is a message of peace; we intend to resolve the issues through talks. The state never wanted to fight and never wanted power to be vested in one individual or in a particular group [words indistinct]. The people themselves, through their delegates who can represent their will, should express their choice in regard to the leadership in Afghanistan.

We have always said that all issues should be resolved through talks and [words indistinct]. We have and will stand up against the unholy intentions of foreigners and we will not allow anyone or any country, whether a neighboring country or a powerful country elsewhere, to violate the sanctity of our national independence, honor, historical glories, and national unity.

Nevertheless, once again, we call on all those who, in the name of opposition forces and under the banner of opposition to the Islamic State, have created conflicts, and all those who are being used as a tool in the hands of foreigners against the interests of their nation and people, to resolve issues through understanding. We are ready to meet with opposition representatives wherever suitable, so that security and calm may be restored and fighting may be ended in our country as soon as possible, and our people can start the reconstruction of the country. [passage omitted]

We hope, God willing, by finding a solution to the current conflicts and by preventing foreign interference, to witness the restoration of security in our country. [passage omitted]

Hekmatyar Reportedly Rejects Mas'ud Peace Plan

LD1101193496 Tehran IRNA in English 1901 GMT 11 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Jan. 11, IRNA — Leader of Afghanistan's Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] Golboddin Hekmatyar has reportedly dismissed a new peace plan initiated by Afghan Defence Minister and Commandar-in-Chief of the Armed Forces Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, said a party official.

Qarib Urrahman, who identified himself as a spokesman of the Hezb-e Eslami, told IRNA in the northern Pakistani city of Peshawar that the new plan was "tactical and waste of time" and that it does not contain any new point.

Mas'ud had announced a four-point plan in Kabul on Wednesday [10 January] aimed at ending the Afghan crisis. The plan calls for a ceasefire, reopening of roads leading to the capital Kabul, exchange of POWs and start of peace negotiations among different Afghan factions.

Qarib Urrahman once again called on Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani to resign from his office and thought it to be the only way for ending the Afghan crisis.

Three week ago in Kabul, President Rabbani announced his readiness to hold talks with different Afghan groups including the Taleban militia.

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HCC, Taleban Representatives Start Talks in Islamabad

LD1301145196 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 13 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The authorities of the High Coordination Council [HCC] and the Taleban group have recently started talks in Islamabad.

Reports received from Islamabad say that the representatives of the HCC's member formations — engineer Qotboddin Helal, 'Abdol Baqi Turkistani, and Dr. Taleb — and from the Taleban side — Mola Dost — have taken part in these talks.

The report says that in the talks, which have been under way in Islamabad since last Wednesday, [words indistinct] exchange of views are being made.

Political observers believe that if the parties agree to have a joint stance, the country's present crisis will be quickly resolved and a durable peace and security will be restored in Afghanistan.

Government, Taleban Battles Near Kabul Reported

Rockets Kill 5, Injure 18

LD1101162596 Tehran IRNA in English 1559 GMT 11 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Jan. 11, IRNA — Five people lost their lives and 18 others were wounded in Kabul at noon on Thursday when 13 rockets and artillery shells hit the Afghan capital, Kabul.

The rockets landed at Makroyan residential area where most government employees are living. The rockets destroyed five residential houses, killing five people.

The emergency ward of Vazir Akbar Khan hospital in Kabul told IRNA correspondent that those injured in the attack have been hospitalized there.

The Talebans have embarked on pounding the capital city with rockets and long range artillery shells in the past three months, killing and wounding 2,000 people and destroying hundreds of residential houses.

On Wednesday eight rockets slammed into a residential area in Kabul killing and wounding 13 people.

Explosion in Ammunition Dump

LD1301172596 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 13 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An explosion occurred recently at a Taleban ammunition dump in Khowst. Reports reaching BAKHTAR say that the depot, which contained different kinds of ammunition, was exploded by Mawlawi 'Abdol Latif Mansur's men. The depot belonged previously to Golboddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party]. The depot was burning for two days.

Clashes in Paktia

LD1301173496 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 13 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Recently heavy clashes have taken place between Mawlawi 'Abdol Latif Mansur's men and the Taleban in Paktia Province. Reports reaching BAKHTAR say that during the clashes, which took place in Gardez, the capital of Paktia Province, a large number of Mansur's men and Taleban were killed or injured. The cause of clashes is so far unknown but it is said that the people of the area are unhappy with Taleban's presence in their villages.

Ministry Says Attack 'Failed'

LD1301113396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 13 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Taleban attack on two areas south of Kabul has failed. The Daralaman region and the Palang-1 and Palang- 2 hills, as well as Kheyrabad and Chehelsotun, were the scene of exchanges of heavy weapons fire between the Taleban and Afghan Government forces last night.

Afghan Defense Ministry sources said the Taleban have been unable to move or transfer their forces in the last few days because of resistance by the government forces. The sources added: The Taleban forces have retreated to their original positions, leaving a number of dead and injured.

Afghan Government aircraft attacked Taleban positions south of Kabul, in Kheyrabad and Rishkhor, yesterday.

[Tehran IRNA in English in a Kabul-datelined item at 1033 GMT on 13 January reports: "Two persons were killed and two others wounded in the overnight shelling of the Afghan capital by the Taleban. The Kabul security commission said that at least six rockets were fired at two residential areas, damaging two houses. More than 2,000 people have been killed and wounded while thousands have become homeless in Taleban attacks that began in October when the group managed to reach the southern and southwestern outskirts of Kabul."]

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Clash in Nimruz Province

LD1301144696 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 13 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Fighting has broken out between the Kabul administration and the Taleban group around Nimruz Province [west of Afghanistan].

Reports received by Radio Message of Freedom say that the men of the Kabul administration under the command of Amanollah, have recently clashed with the Taleban forces in the area of Mirabad, Nimruz Province. As a result of the fighting a large number of men from the belligerent sides were killed and injured. [Words indistinct]

Rockets Strike Kabul

LD1401164696 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Taleban fired nine rockets into the residential areas of Kabul City wounding a child. BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY reported that last night and today nine rockets hit the residential areas of the city as a result of which a child was wounded and a house was damage.

Twelve Taleban Killed in Ghazni

LD1501180496 Tehran IRNA in English 1728 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Jan. 15, IRNA — Twelve Taleban forces were killed and several others wounded in clashes in the Afghan province of Ghazni, said official sources on Monday [15 January].

According to sources at Aghanistan's Defense Ministry, during a assault launched by the government forces and their allies, arms and ammunitions were seized.

In related news, an ammunition depot of the Taleban militia exploded recently, destroying thousands of pieces of light and heavy arms and a considerable amount of ammunitions.

The Afghan official sources, while refraining from divulging the identity of persons involved in the explosion, explained that internal differences among the Talebans has resulted in conflicts among them.

In the last two months, several ammunition depots of the Taleban forces have reportedly been set on fire in different provinces of Afghanistan.

Bangladesh

Opposition Asks President To Urge Zia To Step Down

BK1301141296 Dhaka THE DAILY STAR in English 6 Jan 96 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Awami League [AL] yesterday requested President Abdur Rahman Biswas to advise Prime Minister [PM] Begum Khaleda Zia to step down immediately to facilitate holding of the next general elections under a caretaker government.

The request was made by AL stalwarts Amir Hossain Amu, Tofael Ahmed and Mohammad Nasim who called on the President yesterday evening at the Bangabhaban [President House].

At the hour-long meeting, the AL leaders apprised the President of the latest political situation in the country and requested him to exercise his 'constitutional powers.'

"We told the President to exercise his authorities and request the PM to step down," said Mohammad Nasim, Organising Secretary of the AL.

Talking to THE DAILY STAR last night, he said that they reminded the President of his powers under which he asked the PM to continue in office for the interim period after dissolution of the JS [Jatiya Sangsad — Parliament].

"We requested the President to exercise that power again," he added.

Meanwhile, the backstage negotiation between the ruling party and the Opposition has now brought the rival groups closer than ever before, sources close to the negotiators yesterday said.

They indicated that the negotiations, brokered by the diplomats from two influential countries, focused more on the possibility of deferring the present election schedule and holding the elections sometimes in late March.

Besides, frequent meetings of the opposition leaders with the president as well as the Chief Election Commissioner, an international pressure to resolve the long-drawn crisis within the shortest possible time and the role of the left-leaning organisation in the dialogue have also moved the parleys faster, they pointed out.

The opposition political organisations could take part in an election under the advisory body headed by the President on the assurances of deferring the polls further, correcting the existing anomalies in the voter list,

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and if necessary, reorganising the Election Commission (EC), opposition sources indicated.

A senior leader of the Jatiya Party said that the dialogue's nature was more focused than before.

"We are now working on arrangements and settling a suitable date for the elections so that the opposition parties could take part in it," he said, requesting anonymity.

An Awami League leader said that there was a strong possibility of a round-table hosted by the President where all the parties could sit together to settle the outstanding problems.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister had a meeting with three important ministers at her Cantonment residence late last night, BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] sources said.

The three were BNP Secretary General and LGRD [Local Government and Rural Development] minister Abdus Salam Talukdar, Commerce and Information Minister Shamsul Islam and Food and Agriculture Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, they said.

Opposition Criticizes Election Schedule Change

BK1001125996 Dhaka THE MORNING SUN in English 9 Jan 96 p 1

[Report by UNB]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Awami League President Sheikh Hasina on Monday [8 January] said without solving the main problem mere changes in the election schedule would not put an end to the staggering political crisis, reports UNB.

"BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] is suffering from indecision. Despite deferring the election schedule repeatedly, it has proved its total failure in holding the election," she said in a reaction to the latest revised schedule of the election.

The Election Commission has changed the election schedule for the third time on Monday deferring the polling date to February 15 from February 7.

"The Election Commission and the BNP are making farce with the nation by changing the election date time and again." Hasina said.

The demand of the people and all opposition political parties is the election under a neutral nonpartisan caretaker government, she said.

Without a caretaker government, the opposition would not take part in the election. Hasina demanded that the Prime Minister resigns forthwith to allow election under caretaker government.

She said the Prime Minister was committed to resign before the election, but she did not keep her promise. "Obstinacy and lust for power of the Prime Minister is pushing the country towards a confrontation."

BNP has chosen the path of conflict and violence instead of resolving the crisis through discussion and understanding. Hasina said she had sincerely tried to solve the crisis through discussion.

All opposition political parties including Awami League want a free and fair election while BNP wants to stay in power through rigging, Hasina said.

We are trying our best to protect the voting rights of the people, she said and called on the people to continue the ongoing movement to force Begum Zia to resign for a neutral caretaker government and ensure participation of all parties in the polls.

Another report adds: Jama'at-e-Eslami on Monday said there is no scope for resolving the prevailing political crisis without the resignation of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

Giving an initial reaction to the deferment of general election for the third time Jamaat Publicity Secretary Abdul Qader Mollah said mere changes in the election schedule will not bring about any solution.

"Consensus can only be possible after the Prime Minister's resignation." he said.

Mollah said the opposition is determined to realise its demand for non-party neutral caretaker government through movement.

"We will announce an allout action programme on Wednesday (Jan 10) if Prime Minister Begum Zia does not resign by today (Tuesday)." the Jamaat leader said, adding the opposition will not sit with the government until the Prime Minister resigns.

[Hong Kong AFP in English at 1243 GMT on 10 Jan in a Dhaka dateline report adds the following: "The Bangladeshi opposition on Wednesday announced a fresh phase in its campaign to topple Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's government, including a nationwide dawn-to- dusk general strike on January 17.

"In separate rallies in Dhaka, the groups said the strike would coincide with the final date for the filing of nomination papers for the February 15 general elections. They added that they would lay siege to the chief election commissioner's office on January 18.

"They also warned Zia and her ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) against holding 'farcical' elections with what they described as bogus political parties."]

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Minister Faults Opposition Stand on Negotiations

BK1201024396 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0200 GMT 12 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Information and Commerce Minister Mohammad Shamsul Islam has said the opposition leaders have not responded to the government's offer of sitting across the negotiating table for resolving the issue regarding participation of all parties in the coming parliamentary elections. He was talking to BSS in Dhaka yesterday on the outcome of the government's efforts to bring the opposition to the coming elections. He said BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukdar and he himself had talks with the Awami League leaders on Sunday [7 January] over telephone inviting them to come to the negotiating table for resolving the issue, but no reply has yet been received from them.

Replying to a question, Mr. Islam said the government has given enough concessions to the opposition and it is now up to the opposition to come for the negotiation.

Ruling Party Offers 'Advisory Council' on Election

BK1401140596 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0200 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] and LGRD [Local Government and Rural Development] and Cooperatives Minister Abdus Salam Talukdar has reiterated that his party will continue its efforts to resolve the current political impasse for bringing all political parties in the coming elections within the constitutional purview and timeframe. He was talking to a group of journalists at his residence in Dhaka last night. He said the BNP has (?duly) offered to form a advisory council headed by the president with all executive powers in his hands. Such a proposition satisfies the basic demands of the opposition parties. Barrister Talukdar said anyway the neutral persons will be chosen as advisers. The BNP secretary general said it is for up to the opposition to accept the proposition of the advisory council. Replying to a question, he said there is no need for the prime minister to resign if there is no agreement between the opposition and the BNP.

The BNP standing committee at a meeting yesterday with chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia reviewed the latest political situation in the country. The meeting decided to uphold constitution and democracy and carry forward party's programs.

Awami League Leader Vows To Resist Elections

BK1601051196 Dhaka THE MORNING SUN in English 11 Jan 96 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina on Wednesday [10 January] accused the government of Begum Khaleda Zia of hatching a conspiracy to mislead the people about the opposition's on-going movement and said that the prime minister (PM) was now knocking at the door of Ershad [jailed former president] to ensure his participation in the next election.

Addressing a big public meeting at city's Panthapath, she urged the people to remain alert against any conspiracy and get themselves ready to make supreme sacrifice for realising the demand for election under a neutral non-party caretaker government.

"We want to say clearly that Awami League would not participate in any election under the BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] government," Hasina said adding that the party will continue the movement until the voting rights of the people are realised.

She further said that BNP wants to hold an election unilaterally under a blue print. It (BNP) wants to prove that there is no difference between the BNP and autocracy through holding another 1988-style election in the country, Hasina added.

Hasina reiterated that Awami League would not allow the unilateral decision of the party in power to hold 1988-style elections.

Announcing a seven-day fresh agitation programme including a dawn-to-dusk hartal [strike] on January 17, she said that her party could not allow anyone to make a mockery of people's rights to food and franchise by holding an election deliberately keeping the opposition out of the fray.

"A free and fair election is not possible under the present Election Commission which is functioning in the directives of BNP government," Hasina said asking how a free and fair election could be ensured before correcting the voters' list and under a biased administration?

Describing her sincerity to sit for a dialogue with the government about resolving the prevailing political crisis, she said, "I phoned prime minister requesting her to accept the demand for elections under a neutral non-party caretaker government. But unfortunately, in reply, the prime minister said that she (PM) was not aware about neutral non-party caretaker government."

Hasina went on to say that she had proposed the PM to sit for talks in favour and against the caretaker government issue which would be broadcast live over

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radio and television to avoid distortion of the dialogue. But, the prime minister was yet to respond to that proposal, she added.

Bitterly criticising the atrocities on the leaders and activists of Awami League in the name of recovering illegal arms, she asked the prime minister, the Election Commission and members of law enforcing agencies that why they did not take action against the armed terrorists of BNP and its student front Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal who were moving openly with the home minister and the energy minister.

The identified killer of renowned businessman Shamsul Alam of Gulshan area was released immediately after arrest, Hasina alleged.

Farmers, labourers, teachers and ansars [paramilitary forces] were killed during the rule of BNP. Home minister himself admitted that some one lakh illegal arms were in the hands of terrorists. How much arms have so far been recovered, she asked.

Hasina alleged that the house of Liton Chowdhury, an ex-MP of Awami League and relative of Hasina, was raided by police and army in the name of recovering arms. In this context, she referred the incident of killing of Bangabandhu [former President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman] in August 15, 1975 and said there was an ill motive behind raiding the house of a relative of her family.

In an emotion-choked voice Hasina said, "my father, mother, brothers and close relatives were killed by the defeated forces of 1975." She posed a question as to how much blood they want from her family.

Prime minister had committed to repeal the Indemnity Ordinance that blocked the trial of Bangabandhu's killer, but she did not fulfill her commitment, Hasina said.

The rally was organised to mark the home-coming day of Bangabandhu which was addressed among others by Awami League Presidium members Abdus Samad Azad, Zillur Rahman, Tofael Ahmed, Amir Hossain Amu, Suranjit Sengupta and Abdul Jalil.

India

Reportage on Planned Prithvi Missile Test

Set for 'Next Week'

BK1401090596 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0500 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] According to reports, India will test fire a medium range surface-to-surface missile next week to check its maneuverability. It will be the 14th test of the Prithvi missile since 1988 and the third since it was handed over to the Ministry of Defense. International disarmament experts say India also has the capability to arm its weapons with nuclear warheads. India has also test fired a long-range missile the Agni with a range of 2,400 km.

16 Jan Launch Postponed

BK1601032996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 16 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The surface-to-surface medium range missile, Prithvi, will be test fired from the interim test range at Chandipur on sea in Orissa today. This will be an extended trial of the missile having a range of 150 to 250 kms. Today's launch will be the 15th in the series and eighth from the interim test range. The first test fire of the indigenously built missile took place from Sriharikotta launch center on 22 February 1988.

'Unavoidable Reasons' Postpone Test

BK1601115896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1135 GMT 16 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The surface-to-surface medium-range missile, Prithvi, will undergo flight trials for a longer range toward the end of this month. Earlier, the 150-km version of the missile had undergone user trials successfully at the interim test range at Chandipur-on-Sea in Orissa.

The launching of the extended version slated for today was postponed because of unavoidable reasons. A Defense Ministry spokesman said in New Delhi today that the subsystems of the missile are currently being tested and launching is planned for the 27th of this month.

Prithvi, Other Missiles 'Available for Export'

BK1601051596 Delhi THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 14 Jan 96 p 1

[Report by Dinesh Kumar]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The indigenously developed Prithvi surface-to-surface missile, which has generated much controversy in the West, is available for export, according to a catalogue prepared by the defence ministry's department of defence production and supplies.

A mention of the Prithvi missile has been made on page 52 of the catalogue under the sub-head "Missile" and shown to be produced by Bharat Dynamics Limited, a public sector undertaking which is administratively controlled by the defence ministry. While the intermediate-range Agni ballistic missile has been left out, other mis-

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siles mentioned along with the Prithvi are the indigenously developed Trishul surface-to-air missile and the Milan-2 and Konkurs anti-tank guided missiles.

The catalogue titled Indian Defence Products, was compiled by the director-general of quality assurance and first printed in September 1994. "This catalogue seeks to bring to opinion makers planners and prospective buyers the extensive range of products manufactured under the aegis of the department of defence production and supplies of the government of India," states the foreword. It adds that complete information on products could be obtained from the joint secretary (exports) in the defence ministry. The post has been created to export indigenously manufactured weapon systems.

A message signed by minister of state for defence M. Mallikarjun says, "the department of defence production and supplies is bringing out this catalogue of Indian defence products available for export as a step towards projecting the defence export potential of our country."

The United States has been asking India to restrain its missile development programme, asserting that the production and deployment of ballistic missiles would be a "very destabilising development." In a statement before a Senate panel on Near-Eastern and South Asian affairs in March last year, US assistant defence secretary Joseph S. Nye had said that the US government had asked India not to deploy ballistic missiles stating that any ballistic missile competition in the region would be "terribly destabilising."

However, while intervening in a debate in Parliament on April 28 last year Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao not only confirmed that user trials of the missile system had been completed but revealed that "subsequent activities" were progressing. Without listing these activities he had gone on to state that India would not buckle under anybody's pressure as far as defence preparedness is concerned.

Key Figure in Bombay Bomb Blast Arrested in Bahrain

BK1101164096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 11 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The brother of the underworld gangster, Dawood Ibrahim, has been arrested in Bahrain. He is one of the key accused in the Bombay blast case. A CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] spokesman said in New Delhi today that he was carrying a (?Belize) passport with an assumed name of Mohammad Anees Sheikh at the time of his arrest yesterday. His name in the record is Anees Ibrahim Keshkar and he is carrying a reward of 10 lakh [one lakh is equal to 100,000] rupees. The spokesman said CBI will seek his deportation to India.

3 Accused Detained in Bahrain

BK1401105996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Three more members of the Dawood Ibrahim gang are reported to have been detained by the Bahrain authorities in connection with the Mumbai (Bombay) blast case. Agency reports quoting Mumbai police sources say that one of the arrested is a partner of the main accused, Tiger Memon, while the other two are involved in many contract killings in the city. The CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] is understood to have sought confirmation from the Bahrain Government on the reported arrest of these persons.

New Delhi Businessmen Arrested in Arms Dropping Case

BK1201032996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 12 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Central Bureau of Investigation [CBI] last night detained 12 businessmen in New Delhi in connection with the Purulia arms dropping case. According to PTI, the CBI also conducted raids on 25 premises and seized incriminating documents. The detained persons are said to be the business associates of the fugitive Kim Peter Davy, a Kiwi [as heard] national and a key suspect in the case. The searches were conducted following a tip- off from Interpol regarding the whereabouts of Kim Davy.

Meanwhile, the acting chief metropolitan magistrate, Calcutta, has issued non-bailable warrant of arrests against two persons and remanded them to police custody till the 20th of this month in connection with the case. They were arrested by the CBI in Bangalore and brought to Calcutta.

Alert Notices Issued for Purulia Arms Suspects

BK1401160496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Interpol has issued alert notices against three absconding prime suspects in the Purulia arms dropping case. As per notice Kim Peter Davy, Satyanarayana Gowda alias Randy, and Daya Manikam Anand are to be detained in any part of the world when cited. CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] sources said their red corner [as heard] notice has been issued by Interpol on the request made by the apex investigating agency.

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Iran's Foreign Minister on Official Visit

Criticizes U.S. for Arming Pakistan

BK1301095896 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 12 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Iran today criticized the United States for arming Pakistan. Talking to reporters in Mumbai [Bombay], the Iranian foreign minister, Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati, said Iran was against any kind of militarization of this very sensitive Asian region.

Later addressing the CII [Confederation of Indian Industry], Dr. Velayati said India was a greater economic power in Asia and a powerful and responsible country in the region. He expressed willingness to enhance trade and industrial cooperation with India, specially in the fields of oil, gas, and energy.

Discusses Ties With Mukherjee

LD1301121196 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 13 Jan 96

[Telephone report by unidentified correspondent in New Delhi]

[FBIS Translated Text] Iranian Foreign Minister Velayati met and conferred with Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee in New Delhi this morning.

The two foreign ministers stressed their countries' interest in expanding ties and extending regional and international cooperation. At the meeting the recent illegal stances against the Islamic Republic of Iran by America were noted. Our country's foreign minister assessed India's position on opposing the U.S. sanctions to be positive. He expressed the hope for a further meeting for the purpose of convening the joint economic commission in Tehran.

Referring to the effects of cooperation in regional stability, he considered the future of cooperation among the regional states to be bright. The foreign minister also described the effects of regional cooperation between ECO [Economic Cooperation Organization] and SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation], a vast economic-commercial region, as positive for bringing the countries closer together and improving the trend of development in those areas. He added: Such cooperation will help bring political positions closer together and will contribute to regional stability.

At this meeting, the Indian foreign minister described relations between Iran and India as important. He said: The interest of the two countries in expanding various aspects of their ties — which was declared during President Rafsanjani's visit to India last year — has given impetus to those ties. Mr. Mukherjee referred to Iran's constructive efforts to improve relations among regional states and strengthen regional cooperation. He stressed the need for consultations between the two Nonaligned Movement member states on issues of mutual interest.

Meets With Rao

LD1301155696 Tehran IRNA in English 1528 GMT 13 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi, Jan. 13, IRNA — Indian Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao said that recent anti-Iranian policies of the U.S. amount to intervention in the internal affairs of Iran and India does not support such policies.

Talking to Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati in New Delhi today, Rao appreciated Iranian efforts for peaceful solution to the Afghanistan crisis and stated that India will back a solution that brings a peaceful end to that crisis. He expressed his satisfaction at the existing state of cooperation between the two countries and underlined the importance of the project for the laying of a gas pipeline from Iran to India. Rao said that Velayati's participation in the centenary celebrations of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), held at Bombay, would help strengthen the cooperation between private sectors of the two countries.

Velayati thanked India for its support to Iran against the U.S. policy of imposing bans. He said that the proposed gas pipeline from Iran to India through Pakistan would expand regional cooperation. Velayati also stressed on the importance of the cooperation between India and Iran in the Central Asian region.

Velayati is leaving tonight, completing his two-day visit to India.

Iran

President: U.S. 'Can Do Nothing To Harm' Country

LD1201121796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 12 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Hashemi-Rafsanjani led the Tehran Friday prayers today. In his sermons, he set out to analyze America's various ploys to confront the Islamic revolution, for instance its recent decision to allocate $20 million to fund subversive operations and create trouble for the sacred system of Islamic republic.

He stressed: World public opinion is aware that after the passage of many years since the victory of the

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Islamic revolution, during which numerous instances of selflessness and sacrifice were displayed by the proud, victorious, and resistant nation of Iran, America is still unable to become familiar with this nation and with the spirit of Islamic revolution.

The president added: Even after the debacle of the ineffective hostile policies of America and the defeat of its various economic and military conspiracies against the Islamic Iran, the despotic government of that country is still intent on spending even more hefty sums with the aim of testing our nation and officials.

However, this time too the outcome will be more disgrace and humiliation for America and more honor and pride for the Islamic republic system.

The president said: No other country, except the Zionist regime, has joined the other ploy of America — that is the imposition of economic sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Furthermore, the European Union, which for many years has shown harmony and cooperation with America regarding important and strategic issues, has expressed clear opposition to America's decision, announcing that it will file a complaint with international judicial forums.

[Begin Rafsanjani recording] If our people could not be defeated say 15 or 20 years ago, today, when these people are armed with such an awareness and knowledge and enjoy such vast facilities and potentials that they stand on their own feet as far as meeting all the country's needs are concerned ...[pauses]...Today, even if all the country's gates were closed, Iran would still continue its high standard of living by reliance on its own means. This is the Iran of today which has a type of people who are certainly more revolutionary than before. In the old days, under the domination of the ominous Pahlavi reign, the majority of our people failed to understand many things. But today, even our young children and school pupils have become politicized. They all understand and analyze things.

At present, our people enjoy a great deal of experience. They are revolutionaries who have experienced war and have observed and come to contact with various conspiracies hatched by the monafeqin [hypocrites — reference to Mojahedin-e Khalq] and the liberals [last word in English]. Bombs have exploded in these people's Friday prayer rites and their holy shrine of Imam Reza [in Mashhad]. They know what kind of enemies they have.

These people cannot be frightened by such ploys and such gestures. As long as these people remain on the arena, America — or for that matter any other power — can do nothing to harm Iran. They may be able to cause some trouble, but we are now accustomed to this after all these years. However, they really are making a mistake and they are the ones who will suffer.

They should repent and change their ways. They should try to learn about the Iran of today and find out about its means and facilities. This is not the way to deal with a major regional power with such long-standing roots. Their approach is an indication of bad taste and mistaken understanding [kaj-fahmi].

We have repeatedly announced that the baseless excuses that Iran manufactures nuclear and chemical weapons, or that it supports terrorism or disregards human rights, are in fact the characteristics of America itself, and because they do all these things themselves, then they like to accuse someone else too. These things do not apply to us, and our situation is crystal clear.

God willing, this nation, with the very wise leadership of their eminent leader and the illustrious ideas of their imam [Khomeyni], will continue this revolution until the advent of the Lord of the Age [12th Shiite imam] [crowd chants in support] [end recording]

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani then referred to the government's extensive measures to eliminate economic deprivation and remedy the underdevelopment of various parts of the country, including Greater Tehran. He said: In view of the long period of deprivation in the past, the migration of the rural population, and the anarchic growth of housing estates around Tehran, the government has now taken measures to deal with these issues. Simultaneous with implementing infrastructural projects all over the country, the government has also carried out important and valuable projects in Tehran and its suburbs.

The president added that some of these projects have included: modifying the physical structure of Tehran, the development of city parks, modernization and renovation of streets and pavements, construction of major bridges, building cultural centers, the transfer of industrial units [to suburbs], and the control of surface waters through construction of a drainage system. [passage omitted]

President Criticizes U.S. 'Disruption' Plan

LD1201151996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1152 GMT 12 Jan 96

[Second Friday sermon by President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani at Tehran University on 12 January — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] An issue that I consider important enough to say a few words

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about is foreign policy and the situation the U.S. government is trying to create for Iran. I wish to give some explanations to you about it and paint a true picture of it without any slogans and hue and cry.

What is happening is really an honor for the Islamic revolution and a lasting disgrace for the U.S. Government. As you know, for some months it [the United States] has been at it. It first officially declared an embargo, which brought it a great deal of disgrace. Its move was so weak that no country in the world except Israel, and no company, except inside America cooperated. For a superpower which claims to possess world dominance and an unchallenged power it was very disgraceful. Thank God, that stage has been put behind us, more or less.

They started another move, which is still being formulated. Some committees in the U.S. Congress approved a $20 million plan to cause disruption in Iran. The resulting disgrace was even worse than the previous occasion. That time, they said we will have no cooperation regarding oil. They put an embargo on it. This time, they took an aggressive and blatant step. They said we will pay to cause disruption. [crowd chants: "Death to America"]

I want to explain to you that America will gain nothing from such actions, except disgrace for its foreign policy. I will now explain. The root of the matter is that America has not understood Iran yet. It is strange for a government with so many eyes, spies, and intelligence centers to be so uninformed. When it comes to the Islamic revolution of Iran, America has always suffered from its lack of knowledge or incorrect understanding. Even when we were staging the revolution, had it realized and understood the Iranian people, it should have done something then.

When America was here, when the armed forces, the law enforcement forces, our oil, and SAVAK were under its control, and they [Americans] sat at the Armed Forces headquarters and ruled — they even ruled the Shah — they need not have spent any money. Because six million barrels of oil was being produced and they took what they wanted first and others' shares were handed out afterward.

When it [America] was here, it had Iran's resources under its control and ruled the country, it couldn't understand the revolution. It thought we were a bunch of simpletons in schools, mosques, and prayer houses. They [Americans] thought, they [Iranians] can't do anything; they have no political party; they have no army; they have no foreign power backing them; they are just a group causing a disturbance — they will calm down later.

That is what they thought. They didn't understand. And when they left, they never left us alone. You saw what the den of espionage [U.S. embassy] was engaged in just after the victory of the revolution. [passage omitted]

It couldn't do anything in those days, with all its facilities, with 6 million barrels of Iranian oil at its disposal, so it is obvious that its passing of the $20 million bill and threatening us stems from nothing but ignorance and lack of understanding.

In those days, when the revolution was not established, we didn't have the [Guards] Corps, this industrial power, these 1.3 million strong universities, so much potential for construction, and also we had thousands of problems in the country, you [America] could not do anything. Now that our organizations are well established and strong, all the legal machinery is in place, our people are so alert and on the scene, what can you do with $20 million? It would cost you more than $20 million to send a ship and a few people on it from America to the Persian Gulf. Its not worth your making threats. I really see no reason for it but ignorance.

It thought European countries would cooperate with that gesture. It received the first slap in the face from the EU, whose members were America's allies and comrades-in-arms in many world issues, when it [EU] declared that it would go to court. It is obvious that it was a rash move.

In my opinion, the only way for America is to spend the $20 million and the rest of its money to understand Iran and these people. [crowd chants: "God is great," "Khamene'i is the leader," "Death to America" and a other indistinct names]

Truly, if our people could not be defeated say 15 or 20 years ago, today, when these people are armed with so many possibilities, such an awareness and knowledge, and enjoy such a vast degree of facilities and potentials that they stand on their own feet as far as meeting all the country's needs are concerned ...[pauses]...I have said that today, even if all the country's gates were closed, Iran would still continue its high standard of living by reliance on its own means. This is the Iran of today which has a type of people who are certainly more revolutionary than before. In the old days, under the domination of the ominous Pahlavi reign, the majority of our people failed to understand many things. But today, even our young children and school pupils and old men have become politicized. They all understand and analyze things. No matter what subject you discuss with these people today, you soon realize that they are aware of the matter.

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At present, our people enjoy a great deal of experience. They are revolutionaries who have experienced war and have observed and come to contact with various conspiracies hatched by the monafeqin [hypocrites — reference to Mojahedin-e Khalq] and the liberals [last word in English]. Bombs have exploded in these people's Friday prayer rites and their holy shrine of Imam Reza [in Mashhad]. They know what kind of enemies they have.

These people cannot be frightened by such ploys and such gestures. As long as these people remain on the arena, America — or for that matter any other power — can do nothing to harm Iran. They may be able to cause some trouble, but we are now accustomed to this after all these years. However, they really are making a mistake and they are the ones who will suffer the most.

They should repent and change their ways. They should try to learn about the Iran of today and find out about its means and facilities. This is not the way to deal with a major regional power with such long-standing roots. Their approach is an indication of bad taste and mistaken understanding [kaj-fahmi].

We have repeatedly announced that the baseless excuses that Iran manufactures nuclear and chemical weapons, or that it supports terrorism or disregards human rights, are in fact the characteristics of America itself, and because they do all these things themselves, then they like to accuse someone else too. These things do not apply to us, and our situation is crystal clear.

God willing, this nation, with the very wise leadership of their eminent leader [Khamene'i] and the illustrious ideas of their imam [Khomeyni], will continue this revolution until the advent of the Lord of the Age [12th Shiite imam]. May God's peace and blessing be upon you all.

President Said To Show Country's Resolve Against U.S.

LD1301135096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 13 Jan 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani, in the Friday prayer sermons on January 12th, called the U.S. plans against Islamic Republic a result of Washington leaders' ignorance and manifestation. The president said it is very strange to the world that in spite the many years passed since the Islamic revolution and the many trials of the proud nation of Iran's path and resistance, the U.S. has still not come to know the Iranian nation and the nature of the Islamic revolution.

The statements by the Islamic Republic president are a clear analysis of the fact that today the Islamic Republic of Iran is stronger and more stable than ever before and with a firm and unshakable resolve is standing up to the world dominance and bullying system, on top of which the U.S. has based itself.

A look at the U.S. schemes against Iran in the past year shows the continuation of American conspiracies so far [word indistinct] completely illegal and illegitimate plans against the Iranian nation and government. The recent American plan to allocate 20 million dollars out of 27 billion-dollar U.S. foreign budget to the CIA in order to expand covert action against Islamic Republic is part of those schemes. Although this plan was immediately condemned by different countries and independent groups present in the international arena, these reactions are not the only aspect of the U.S. defeat of its anti-Tehran foreign policy. The negative effects of these American actions have been so great that the Western experts and analysts have evaluated the hasty decisions of the White House to be a result of Zionist pressures on the U.S. Government. In any case the recent hostile American decisions against Islamic Republic which are flagrant violations of UN Charter, the GATT agreement, and the Algiers Accord between the two countries have so far had nothing but defeat and humility for the White House. Clinton has set foot on a path which had but frustration and disgrace for its predecessors. Current hostile American policies against Tehran can only demonstrate the arrogant and interventionist American policies to the world.

Demonstrators in Dehloran Condemn U.S. 'Conspiracies'

LD1301160496 Tehran IRNA in English 1435 GMT 13 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dehloran, Ilam Prov., Jan. 13, IRNA — Thousands of the inhabitants of this border township, in west of Iran, rallied on Saturday [13 January] in which they condemned the recent move by the U.S. against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The demonstrators, chanting slogans such as "down with the U.S." and "down with Israel", displayed their resentment toward inhuman conspiracies of the White House.

The ralliers renewed their allegiance with the leader of the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, and vowed to counter the sinister plots of the global arrogance and its lackeys.

The war-torn border township of Dehloran, 228 kilometers south of Ilam, has a population of 55,000.

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Budget Bill, Allocation of Anti-U.S. Fund Viewed

NC1601134596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 16 Jan 96

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Majles will begin discussing the 138- trillion-rial budget bill for 1375 [year beginning 21 March 1996] at its open session today. The bill, presented 51 days ago by President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, has been undergoing examination since then by a special commission comprising members of the Plan and Budget Commission and the heads of the other specialized Majles commissions. Several amendments were made after which it was handed over to the Majles' open session for final approval.

Among the most important changes in the bill was the allocation of a 25-billion-rial budget to uncovering and confronting American plots. This change came after the U.S. Congress' impudent decision, contrary to international law, to approve a $20-million budget for subversive operations in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

But in addition to this laudable step by the Majles, deputies have also tried to increase assistance and the foreign exchange quota of essential goods and medicine and thus mitigate the pressure of prices on the poor, so that next year, despite the population growth, there will be no shortages of essential goods and the quantity of goods will be the same as this year and available to everyone.

In next year's budget bill, as well as these allocations, credits are allocated to increasing the wages of civil servants and the Armed Forces; to strengthening the civil servants' consumer and housing cooperatives; as well as to creating jobs, especially in the deprived areas. Also, huge credits have been envisaged for implementing a universal insurance law and creating education facilities approved by the members of the special Majles commission.

But the most important characteristic of the 1375 budget bill is the unprecedented allocation to development projects, increased—for the first time in three decades—to over 42 percent of total government expenditure. Much of the budget bill's development expenditure is allocated to the development of water and soil resources and to speeding up the construction of 20 large reservoir dams that will become operational in 1376. They will ensure the supply of the 2.5 billion cubic meters of water needed by the agricultural sector and will pave the way for increasing cultivated land and increasing returns from farming. The construction and equipping of the oil, gas, electricity, roads, railways, and telecommunications infrastructures has been given special attention in the budget bill. About half of the development credits have been allocated to these fields.

The budget bill is the government's fiscal and executive program for the next year and, because of the government's major role in the country's economic activities, it also has a major impact on private sector activities. All the decisionmakers and elements active in the economy, both in the public and the private sectors, must be fully informed of the government's objectives and programs through a careful study of the bill so that they can direct their activities in the right direction and thus make the best use of the facilities the government is giving them.

Egyptian Paper Cited on 'Failure' of U.S. Embargo

LD1201210296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1930 GMT 12 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Egyptian daily of AL-'ARABI wrote on Thursday 11 January that allocation of $20 million by the United States to carry out terrorist operations against Islamic Republic of Iran is the best proof for the failure of U.S. economic embargo against the country. Based on the daily, economic sanctions by the U.S. have had no effect whatsoever on the economy of Iran and that the world has opposed the plan too. The widely circulated daily of AL-'ARABI revealed the failure of U.S. plan against Tehran at a time when Egypt has always been regarded as one of the biggest supporters of U.S. policies among the Arab countries of the Middle East. They clearly depict the righteousness of the Islamic Republic of Iran and unveil U.S. attitude against the country. U.S. Senate approving the $20 million budget against Iran last December caused the anger and indignation of the Muslims and international circles. The bill reveals the U.S. policy's nature is interfering in the internal affairs of other states and supporting terrorist methods that is a blatant violation of international law.

America now, after the collapse of former Soviet Union, feels no boundaries in preserving her illegitimate interests and is trying to expand them by resorting to intervening policies. Political analysts believe that U.S. posturing against Islamic Republic of Iran is rooted in the resistance of the Iranian people against U.S. domination in the world and the region. To withstand such resistance and to guarantee her superiority, the U.S. has always tried to weaken the Islamic Republic of Iran militarily, financially, culturally, and now through terrorist operations. To this end the U.S. methods not only failed to bear any fruit but even strengthened Iran's position vis-a-vis U.S. domination and this is the issue admitted by political and press circles of the world.

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Radio Comments on Clinton's Visit to Bosnia

LD1301181996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 13 Jan 96

[Station commentary: "Clinton's Trip To Bosnia"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] According to news agencies, U.S. president Bill Clinton, today, 13 January, arrived in Bosnia to visit the American marines in that republic. This is the first trip by [the] U.S. President to Bosnia after the signing of the Dayton Agreement. Meanwhile NATO Secretary General Javier Solana has met and conferred with the officials in Zagreb and Sarajevo to remove the tension between Muslims and Croats in Mostar.

Informed sources say Clinton's trip to Bosnia is taking place at a time when concern reached its peak after the rocket attack of the Serbs against an electrical train by the Serbs. The trip is believed to be aimed at regaining public and Congress support in America. American people are worried about the lives of marines in Bosnia. Furthermore the trip is occurring on the verge of presidential elections in America. The Democrats are trying to take advantage of the international developments to counteract the rows with the Republicans over the budget. So one can assume that Clinton's major concern in all issues related to Bosnia and the Arab-Israeli peace are more than anything else is directed towards the electoral campaign. It seems that more efforts by the behind-[the]-scene directors of the Bosnian crisis is to maintain peace and prevent further tension are made to preserve the interests of these parties.

The most practical solution to prevent a breach of peace agreement is firm action by NATO forces, as maintaining peace and punishing the violator are the main duties of these forces. NATO, however, keeps silence in the face of repeated violation of peace agreement and gets along with the Serbs on various excuses. So Clinton's trip to Bosnia cannot create the psychological effect that the region has regained calm as the result of the presence of American troops there.

Bahraini Protesters' Clash With Police Reported

NC1301072496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 13 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] ASSOCIATED PRESS reported that the Bahraini police clashed with Muslim worshipers in a mosque in Manama yesterday. According to the report, the police used tear gas and fired into the air to disperse Muslims who were protesting the closure of a mosque. Some time ago, the Bahraini Government had closed two mosques in Manama without giving any reason for the closure.

Velayati Comments on Indian Relations Viewed

NC1301112196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 13 Jan 96

[Commentary by News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati, foreign minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who is currently in India on a three-day official visit, addressed some Indian business magnates in Bombay yesterday.

He explained Iran's strategic importance and stressed the need for broadening relations between Tehran and New Delhi. During this meeting, Velayati said economic cooperation between Iran and India is one of the basic elements in mitigating tension in south Asia. He said he hoped the construction of a gas pipeline from Iran to south Asia would contribute to the improvement of relations between India and Pakistan.

Political observers believe that in spite of the importance of bilateral economic and trade relations, the Iranian foreign minister's visit to India has drawn the attention of Indian political circles because of the strategic roles of these two countries in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean.

It is no secret that Tehran and New Delhi are the two great regional powers and consider it their obligation and right to organize the security, politics, and commerce in these two sensitive areas. This common stance has been instrumental—despite some cultural differences—in constantly maintaining Iranian-Indian relations at an excellent level.

In addition, political and economic relations between Iran and India can help smooth relations between India and Pakistan and thus ensure peace and stability in south Asia. This is because of Iran's closeness to the people of Pakistan with regard to religion and culture. Through coordination of political and economic interests with the Indian people, Iran has striven for some time to play such a role.

The building of the Iran-India gas pipeline through Pakistani territory is one factor that could bring Islamabad-New Delhi interests closer and help reduce the tension between the two countries.

Accordingly, it is predicted that the political talks scheduled today in New Delhi between Indian leaders and Velayati may center on these political and economic considerations.

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Nateq-Nuri Urges 'Militant' Clerics To Run in Election

LD1301133596 Tehran IRNA in English 1306 GMT 13 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Holy Qom, Jan. 13, IRNA — Majles Speaker Hojat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri said in this holy city on Saturday [13 January] that if members of the Majma'-ye Ruhaniyun-e Mobarez (MRM) [Militant Clerics Society] refused to run for the forthcoming parliamentary elections, the liberals would probably enter the fifth parliament.

Speaking in a meeting with religious preachers, Nateq-Nuri said if the liberals and the technocrats found their way to the parliament, the constitutional era would take place again. The constitutional era in Iran is a reference to the struggle of people against the dictatorship of Qajarid kings which led to the signing of the constitution by one of the Qajarid monarchs, Mozafareddin Shah.

Nateq-Nuri called on the MRM members to take part in the upcoming parliamentary polls due to be held on March 8, and pave the way for massive turnout of people in the elections. He said in the meantime, there was not cohesion among all MRM members and they do not think the same way. Nateq-Nuri said "one of the reasons cited by these gentlemen (MRM members) for not running for parliamentary elections is the supervision of the elections by the Council of Guardians. In my opinion they should not be worried in this respect."

Asked about his candidacy for the post of president, Nateq-Nuri said, "Presidential elections are one and half years away and if the dignitaries deem it appropriate, I am ready to serve sincerely at any post." Meanwhile, he emphasized that whoever undertakes the executive responsiblity, he should follow the second five-year development plan.

Pakistan

Inquiry Into U.S. Citizens' Killing Said Mislead

BK1501085096 Rawalpindi JANG in Urdu 15 Jan 96 p 5,8

[Report by JANG correspondent]

[FBIS Translated Text] Karachi — An official of a semi-government organization, which has been assisting the crime control police, has reportedly been misleading the investigation into the killing of two U.S. nationals near the nursery on Shaharah-e-Faisal in March 1995. The official allegedly prevented the Karachi police and the FBI from establishing extensive contact with each other. This has been disclosed in intelligence reports sent to the prime minister and the government of Sindh. According to the sources, detailed statements from the two arrested last month are attached to the report. Their statements reveal that the U.S. citizens were killed by associates of the accused from Mehmoodabad and that detailed information about the movements of these U.S. nationals was provided to them by the nephew of the above mentioned official. According to the sources, the official of the semi-government organization kept the FBI team away from the police in order to divert the investigation in the wrong direction and to protect the actual culprits. As a result, the FBI team could not collect significant information. It has been claimed in the report that if the FBI team had not kept away from the Karachi police, the two teams could have succeeded in arresting the culprits in a short period of time.

Canadian Prime Minister Visits, Meets With Bhutto

Arrives on 2-Day Visit

BK1401141396 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Canadian prime minister, Mr. Jean Chretien, arrived in Islamabad this afternoon on a two-day visit to Pakistan. He is accompanied by seven chief executives of Canadian provinces and senior officials. A large delegation of Canadian businessmen and investors numbering over 150 also arrived in Islamabad earlier this morning with the Canadian minister for international trade, Roy MacLaren.

Mr. Jean Chretien was received at the Chaklala air base by the foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali. Formal welcome ceremonies are being held this afternoon at the Prime Minister House where the distinguished guest and Madam Jean Chretien will be received by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. After the welcoming ceremonies, the two prime ministers will have a brief meeting and the prime minister, Ms. Benazir Bhutto, will be hosting a banquet in honor of Mr. and Madame Jean Chretien tonight.

The Export Promotion Bureau has arranged an exhibition of Pakistani products in Islamabad today, mainly for Canadian businessmen who arrived in the city today in connection with the visit of the Canadian prime minister to Pakistan. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad today, the chairman of Export Promotion Bureau, Mian Habibullah, said the exhibition is part of the efforts to promote Pakistani export and give the Canadian delegation a view of Pakistani export items. Items displayed at the exhibition include engineering goods, telecom equipment, carpets, leather garments, surgical instruments and handicrafts.

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Discusses Kashmir, Nuclear Issue

BK1501102796 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Formal talks between Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and the visiting Canadian prime minister, Mr. Jean Chretien, were held in Islamabad today covering a wide-range of subjects, including the situation in Kashmir, Afghanistan, nuclear issue, as well as economic cooperation between the two countries.

Briefing newsmen about the talks, the foreign secretary, Mr. Najmuddin Sheikh, said the prime minister briefed her Canadian counterpart about the situation in Kashmir and the Canadian prime minister appreciated that the question of elections in held-Kashmir had complexities. He said the Canadian prime minister has promised to look positively at what contribution Canada can make to help resolve the Kashmir dispute. He said there was also discussion on the nuclear issue and Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto explained various proposals made by Pakistan to advance the nuclear nonproliferation, including Pakistan's preparedness to sign the [Nuclear] Nonproliferation Treaty simultaneously with India. The prime minister expressed her concerns about reports of India's preparations for another nuclear test and said this would have a destabilizing impact on moves for nuclear nonproliferation and peace and stability in the region and globally.

Pakistan and Canada today signed six agreements for promotion of relations between the two countries in different fields. The agreements signed today related to environment, establishment of a joint awami kisan [farmers] dairy and meat project, air services, cooperation in [radio frequency] spectrum management, business development and mutual legal assistance treaty.

The commerce minister, Chaudhary Ahmad Mukhtar, has invited potential investors from Canada to benefit from the highly rewarding investment opportunities in Pakistan in different sectors of the economy. He was speaking at a Pakistan-Canada investment conference organized by the Board of Investment in Islamabad today for the visiting business delegates from Canada and their Pakistani counterparts. Chaudhary Ahmad Mukhtar told the conference that the economic policies of the government of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto have been well received by the international investors community. Pakistan is bestowed with a large variety of natural resources, hard-working population and a strategically located land mass neighboring Middle East and serving as a gateway to Central Asia. These factors give Pakistan the potential of securing a prominent economic position in the region and beyond. The Canadian minister for international trade, Mr. Roy MacLaren, addressing the conference said Canada considers Pakistan as an important and integral part of Asia-Pacific community and Pakistan's determination to privatize public sector projects has generated tremendous interest for foreign investors.

Talks With Bhutto Detailed

BK1601050896 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A number of international issues ranging from nuclear nonproliferation, violation of human rights and nonimplementation of Security Council's resolutions in Indian-occupied Kashmir, and other bilateral matters were prominently figured at the one and half hour meeting between Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and her Canadian counterpart Jean Chretien in Islamabad today.

Foreign Secretary Mr. Najmuddin Sheikh, while briefing on the meeting of two prime ministers, told newsmen that Pakistan is (?playing) its principled stand on Kashmir on the question of Indian proposed elections in the held territory. He said the Canadian prime minister understood the complexities linked with the Indian-designed elections in Kashmir instead of implementing the resolutions of the United Nations. He said the Canadian prime minister promised to examine the issue of Kashmir threadbare. [sentence as heard]

The foreign secretary said Pakistan expressed its readiness to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty if India does so in line with Islamabad's long-term policy to keep the South Asian region as a nuclear free zone. He said in this regard, the Canadian prime minister was given briefing on all those initiatives which Pakistan has taken so far, both bilaterally and multilaterally, to forge an agreement to have an arrangement which can declare the South Asian region as a nuclear free zone.

Afghanistan, the foreign secretary added, came up under discussion and Pakistan explained its position and its cooperation with the United Nations efforts for the restoration of peace in that region. He said Pakistan has offered its cooperation to Canada and other international efforts for the maintenance of peace and security in the region.

Mr. Najmuddin Sheikh also disclosed that bilateral economic cooperation between the two countries was also discussed where Canada recognized Pakistan as a potential market and investment zone because of its geopolitical status in South Asia, Middle East and Central Asian region. He said during the talks, the Canadian prime minister and the provincial premiers assured to develop credible edible oil and fisheries sector in Pakistan.

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Speaking at luncheon ceremony, the Canadian prime minister lauded the economic reforms introduced by the government and expressed his optimism that these reforms would bring positive changes in the socioeconomic structure.

[Begin Chretien recording] I want to begin by applauding the progress that you have been making in Pakistan in recent years. Canadians have been following these reforms with interest and admiration. We salute Prime Minister Bhutto for her determination in implementing manifold economic reforms. In particular, your privatization program led the way among South Asian countries. We recognize that change is not always easy. But we also recognize that these reforms will ultimately lead to greater economic and social opportunities for the people of Pakistan. [end recording]

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto highlighted the economic policies of her government.

[Begin Bhutto recording] Pakistan is indeed a safe market for foreign investment. We have designed our economic policies on the premise that foreign capital is an important factor of development and we in Pakistan need to attract it in large quantity, and we have been working toward giving our country macroeconomic stability. Government credit has been curtailed. Pakistan actually paid off $200 million of its most expensive domestic debt for the first time in our history last year. Our current account deficit has been reduced from 7.14 percent to 3.97 percent of GDP [gross domestic product] and privatization has been made transparent. [end recording]

Bhutto Stresses Kashmir at Banquet

BK1501091596 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The prime minister has urged the international community to replace peacekeeping with peacemaking to resolve international conflicts. Speaking at a banquet she hosted in honor of the Canadian prime minister in Islamabad last night, Benazir Bhutto expressed the hope that Canada will take the initiative in applying this principle to resolve the Kashmir dispute, which threatens regional peace and stability.

She said the Kashmir imbroglio is becoming more and more serious because the pledge made by the international community to grant the right of self-determination to the people of Jammu and Kashmir is being violated repeatedly. She regretted that all bilateral efforts to resolve the Kashmir issue have proven futile. Pakistan is prepared to accept any mechanism for a peaceful resolution of the problem in accordance with the UN resolutions that provide for granting the right of self-determination to Kashmiris. The prime minister said Pakistan wants to establish good neighborly and cooperative relations with India, but the resolution of the Kashmir problem is a prerequisite for achieving this.

Referring to the Indian military program, the prime minister said Pakistan is concerned about reports that India is preparing another nuclear test. She expressed the hope that Canada will use its good offices to persuade India to desist from this. She said Pakistan wants peace, but it cannot ignore the fact that work to manufacture missiles is continuing in full swing in its neighborhood. She said Pakistan deeply appreciates the Canadian position in this regard because Canada is the current chairman of the Group of Seven and can help prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the region. She said the nonproliferation regime should essentially be equitable and nondiscriminatory. She said Canada and Pakistan have worked shoulder-to-shoulder to establish peace in several countries.

Referring to Afghanistan, the prime minister said certain powers do not want to see peace in Afghanistan. The reason is that Afghanistan has assumed a special significance for trade with the newly independent states of Central Asia. She said Pakistan supports the efforts of the United Nations to set up a broad-based and representative government in Afghanistan.

Lauding Canadian assistance for Pakistan's economic development, she said Warsak Dam, KANUPP [Karachi Nuclear Power Plant], and the 500 kilovolt line project are shining examples of Canadian cooperation.

Referring to her government's policies, she said far-reaching economic reforms have been launched in the country to attract private investment. Benazir Bhutto said she believes that Canada and Pakistan can benefit immensely by doing business with each other in a number of sectors. She said Pakistan gives the highest priority to information technology and has declared 1996 the year of information technology.

In response to Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's speech, Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien said his country wants peace in the entire world. He expressed the hope that cooperation between Pakistan and Canada will be further promoted and high-level contacts between them will be stepped up.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien will hold formal talks in Islamabad this morning. The two leaders are expected to exchange views on bilateral relations and matters of mutual interest on regional and international issues. The prime minister will brief the Canadian prime minister

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about the human rights violations by Indian occupation forces in Kashmir and India's denial of the right of self-determination to the people of Kashmir. During the meeting she will also raise India's missile program, which poses a threat to regional stability. In the afternoon, the two prime ministers will witness a ceremony to mark the signing of agreements between investors and traders of the two countries.

Leghari Asks for Help on Kashmir Problem

BK1601053896 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari has asked Canada to exercise its influence on India for a peaceful solution of the Kashmir problem in accordance with UN resolutions. He said this during his talks with the Canadian prime minister, Mr. Jean Chretien, in Islamabad today. The president said if India was willing for a political solution of this problem, Pakistan will hold bilateral or even multilateral talks to resolve the issue. Referring to Afghanistan, the president said Pakistan wanted a just and equitable settlement there taking into account the interest of all ethnic groups and communities. About bilateral relations between Canada and Pakistan, Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari said it was important to expand trade and enhance economic cooperation.

The Canadian prime minister assured that Canada will be happy to play any role to resolve the Kashmir problem between India and Pakistan.

Investments Agreements Signed

BK1501140496 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 15 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan and Canada today signed 25 agreements providing for cooperation and investment of various sectors of the economy. Nineteen agreements were signed by Canadian private investors with their Pakistani counterparts and various public sector corporations envisaging Canadian investment of $2 billion. These agreements relate to energy generation, telecommunications, Karachi Mass Transit System, oil and gas, food processing, medicine, and education sectors. The projects, which were signed in presence of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and the visiting Canadian prime minister, Mr. Jean Chretien, included a 75-megawatt hydro-electric Malakand power prject and 125-megawatt oil-fired power plant near Lahore, a 32-megawatt hydro-electric project near Mangla, Karachi Rapid Mass Transit System, earth station and digital cross-connect system for Telecommunications Corporation, and recovery of gas from Kadiprpur field.

Six other agreements were signed between the two governments after talks between the two prime ministers relating to environment, establishment of an awami [public] dairy and meat project, air services, cooperation in [radio frequency] spectrum management, business development and mutual legal assistance treaty.

Before signing of the agreements by the Canadian investors, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said she was glad that agreements of $2 billion investment investment were being signed today. She said of these $800 million are in the form of direct contracts and the remaining $1.2 billion in the form of investment pledges.

Spokesman on Velayati Talks, Kabul Proposals

BK1101144796 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 11 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan and Iran are engaged in very intensive consultations on all possibilities for the solution of Afghan problem. There is identity of interests and their positions in substance do not differ on this issue. This was stated by a Foreign Office spokesman during a briefing in Islamabad today while commenting on Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati's visit to Pakistan and his talks in Islamabad. The spokesman said the two countries have agreed that Afghans should decide the kind of government, which is broad-based comprising all ethnic and religious groups. He said the two sides after talks have a better appreciation of situation on the ground in Afghanistan and better understanding of each other's position.

Asked to comment on the four-point proposal by Commander Ahmad Shah Mas'ud suggesting a cease-fire, reopening of blocked highways, exchange of prisoners of war, and continuation of dialogue, the spokesman said it is a step backward in terms of demands which the parties out of Kabul regime are making. It is also not in consonance with Mr. Rabbani's own statement that he would step down.

Asked whether Pakistani mediation between the United States and Iran was discussed during talks with the Iranian foreign minister, the spokesman said Pakistan has always expressed readiness to play an intermediary role as we have the best relations with the two countries. However, he said, there are certain impediments in it and at the moment it would be unrealistic to talk about any intermediary role for Pakistan.

About the threats given by a Hindu extremist group Shiv Sena to Pakistani diplomats in New Delhi, the spokesman said Pakistan has taken serious note of this threat and said these are indicative of malicious thinking that prevails in certain circles in India. He said Pakistan

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expects the Indian Government to fulfill its international obligations as well as those under the 1992 bilateral code of conduct for diplomats and will take appropriate measures to ensure the safety of Pakistani diplomats. He also rejected the Indian allegations against Pakistan about arms-dropping in West Bengal.

The spokesman said that nothing has been finalized about trade relations with India nor giving it the most favored nation status. He said this would be considered if India withdraws subsidies to manufacturers and exporters and Pakistani business community is prepared to compete. He said there must be a level playing field in trade ties. The spokesman said Pakistan being member of WTO [World Trade Organization] would honor all its commitments and is committed to discuss trade with India and other WTO members.

To a question about the statement of British Home Secretary Mr. Michael Howard regarding extradition treaty, the spokesman said Pakistan has the intention of creating or setting up a legal framework either bilaterally or through Commonwealth forum to extradite people from either country.

Editorial to Bhutto: 'Defy' U.S. on Nuclear Tests

BK1201160796 Karachi TAKBEER in Urdu 28 Dec 96 p 5

[Editorial: "Go Ahead and Conduct Nuclear Test"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Reports from the United States indicate that India is preparing for another nuclear test and that it has completed preparations for this test in Rajasthan. The NEW YORK TIMES has reported that spy satellites have recorded some activity in Pokaran in the deserts of Rajasthan and have detected scientific and technical activities at the Pokaran test site. India has refrained thus far from directly denying or confirming this report. However, Professor Rotan Narasimha, an eminent scientist at the Indian Research Institute [IRI], has confirmed India's nuclear capability, and IRI Director Rajan has admitted that, although India can detonate a nuclear device anytime it wishes, the current official policy is not to conduct any nuclear tests.

The conclusion that can be very easily drawn from the U.S. disclosures and confessions by the Indian experts is that, unlike Pakistan, India has not halted its nuclear program, and it has been conducting additional research in this field.

During Benazir Bhutto's previous government in Pakistan, a decision was made at a brief meeting between the president, the prime minister, and Army Chief of Staff Mirza Aslam Beg to at least freeze, if not totally abandon, Pakistan's nuclear program in the wake of pressure from the United States and the other major powers. All this was done with the wishful thinking that the powers that were pressuring Pakistan to abandon its nuclear program would ultimately succeed in forcing India to do the same.

The latest disclosures and confessions, however, indicate that this did not happen. The hopes that Bhutto had pinned on the United States and the basis upon which she had proceeded did not materialize, inviting the wrath of the Pakistani people as well as of the entire Islamic world. Instead, her government has come to realize during the past two weeks how selfish the U.S. Government can be. Washington always thinks about the fulfillment of its own interests and does not care at all about protecting the interests of its allies.

Only last week the United States changed its policy on Kashmir and stabbed Pakistan in the back by accepting India's stand, by advising Islamabad to disregard the obsolete UN resolutions on Kashmir and to move forward, abandoning the demand for a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir. This U.S. statement would have made it clear to the prime minister that Washington can never be expected to protect Pakistan's interests. Now no U.S. guarantee can be accepted.

The geopolitical situation of Pakistan is such that it has two nuclear powers—China and India—as its neighbors. According to U.S. reports, Iran will become a nuclear power in the next 10 years. Thus, in the next two decades, we will become a country sharing borders with three nuclear-power states; that is, because of our geopolitical location, we will be living in the world's largest nuclear zone. Since our relations with one of these three nuclear- power states, unfortunately, could not improve over the past 48 years, we cannot expect relations to be any better in the next 60 years. Therefore, what is most needed for our survival under the present circumstances is for Pakistan to also become a nuclear power.

After all, why can we not become a nuclear power when we have the capability? No U.S. guarantee can substitute for the guarantee that Pakistan's becoming a nuclear power would provide for our survival and security. We froze our nuclear program in the wake of U.S. assurances, but we have already seen how the United States has fulfilled its assurances with regard to our nuclear program and Kashmir. We have seen how conveniently Washington has rejected our stand and supported India's viewpoint on Kashmir and how conveniently it disclosed that India is continuing with its nuclear program and also preparing for another nuclear test.

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Given this situation, the entire nation would rally round the prime minister and support her enthusiastically if she were to courageously announce the lifting of the freeze on Pakistan's nuclear program and if Pakistan detonated a nuclear device, which it is capable of doing at any time. Again, we are confident that even the opposition parties would rally around her in the national interest if the prime minister were to change her position and initiate a drive to defy the United States at the international level instead of waging a campaign against her political opponents at home. The prime minister will have to change her government's role as a "U.S. policeman."

'Concern' Reported Over Indian Nuclear Test

BK1401162796 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Canadian prime minister, Mr. Jean Chretien, arrived in Islamabad this afternoon on a two-day visit to Pakistan. He is accompanied by seven chief executives of Canadian provinces and senior officials. Mr. Jean Chretien was received at the Chaklala air base by Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali. Later, the Canadian prime minister was accorded a very formal welcome at the Prime Minister House in Islamabad this afternoon. The two prime ministers afterwards had a brief meeting at the Prime Minister House, which was attended by members of the Canadian prime minister's delegation and some federal ministers and senior officials of Pakistan.

The foreign secretary, Mr. Najmuddin Sheikh has again expressed Pakistan's concern over reports that India may be preparing for a second nuclear test. Talking to newsmen after a brief meeting between the Canadian prime minister, Mr. Jean Chretien, and Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, the foreign secretary said any nuclear test by India would be destabilizing factor in the region and for global efforts to promote nuclear nonproliferation. He said such a test would be a decisive setback to nonproliferation in South Asia and called on the international community to pressurize India to desist from such tests. Replying to a question, the foreign secretary said Pakistan aspires for nuclear nonproliferation regionally and globally and has made a number of proposals for nuclear nonproliferation in South Asian region.

Talking to Canadian journalists, the foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali said Pakistan is ready to sign the NPT [Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty] provided India does the same first.

Sri Lanka

Military Spokesman Denies Use of Napalm Bombs

BK1501122796 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 0901 GMT 15 Jan 96

["LANKAPUVATH/OANA/POOL" Item]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Colombo, Jan 15 (LANKAPUVATH): The LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] is forcing the 300,000 Tamil refugees in Sri Lanka's northern district of Kilinochchi, who are hard pressed for cash due to their movements being restricted by the Tigers, to sell their gold to the terrorists for the unconscionable sum of Rs. [Rupees] 500 a sovereign when the market price in the country is Rs. 2,500. According to Tamil tradition, each family keeps a quantity of gold.

Official sources told LANKAPUVATH that according to latest intelligence reports, these refugees who were forced out of their homes in the city of Jaffna at gunpoint by the terrorists who are using them to obtain food and other aid from the Sri Lankan Government in addition to being used as human shields, are not allowed to leave Kilinochchi and return to Jaffna. However, international relief organisations have, in their reports, stated that the Tamil Relief Organisation (TRO) run by the LTTE, has taken over the distribution of supplies in Kilinochchi and only dole out meager rations to the civilians for whom the supplies are really meant.

The LTTE is also not permitting the many government servants who are among the refugees, to go to government-controlled areas in order to draw their salaries and pensions, the sources said. The LTTE, which has been condemned for its inhuman activities by the European Union, the USA, Britain, France, India and several other countries, is now under increased pressure from the international community to allow all those refugees who want to go to liberated areas in Jaffna including the city of Jaffna, to resume their normal lives, to do so.

Meanwhile, a military spokesman described as a wild canard a LTTE statement issued from its London Secretariat that the Sri Lankan Air Force was using napalm bombs on civilians in the East. He pointed out that Sri Lanka has strongly supported a United Nations ban on chemical weapons and asked the UN to expedite such a move. The spokesman said that the napalm bomb canard was an old tune played by the terrorists when under pressure from the international community and dated as far back as 1986 when such allegations by the LTTE were proved utterly false and malicious.

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Parliament Extends State of Emergency Another Month

BK1201125596 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 12 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The motion to extend the state of emergency by a further month in the north and east and several divisional secretariat areas was passed in parliament yesterday by a majority of 108 votes; 113 MP's voted for the motion, while five voted against it. The United National Party abstained.

Speaking on the extension of the emergency, Deputy Defense Minister Colonel Anuruddha Ratwatte said that the first stage of the operation had been completed with the liberation of Jaffna. The government intends to relocate displaced residents there and in other parts of Velikamam. The aim of the government is to find a lasting solution to the ethnic problem so that the people of the country could live in peace and harmony. He said that the government intended to implement the political package to usher in peace within a democratic framework. Its aim is to defeat and destroy the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] and offer the political package to the people.

He said the government would soon present a political package to bring about permanent peace within the democratic framework. Jaffna has not seen any development in the last 12 years. The helpless ordinary people there suffered for such a long time with no electricity and water. He expressed the hope that the members of the house would extend their unstinted support to the government in its efforts to solve the ethnic problem and also to extend the present state of emergency.

Government, LTTE Report on Battles, Casualties

Colombo Said Preparing Campaign

BK1301081196 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 11 Jan 96

[Compilation of LTTE telephone messages]

[FBIS Translated Text] It has been learned that the Government of Sri Lanka is bracing itself for the second phase of the military operation. A large quantity of materiel have already arrived in Colombo. Moves to procure more weapons are being taken. Under these circumstances, reports suggest that the Chandrika Kumaratunga government is planning for another major military operation.

Observers have expressed apprehensions of heavy losses of life and people being subjected to untold misery if the Sri Lankan Government carries out another military operation.

Meanwhile, the government also plans to strengthen its hold on the East. An officer from the Sri Lankan defense circles said the government will pay more attention the sagging morale of the soldiers in the East as the striking power of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] increases day by day.

The Sri Lankan troops have launched missile attacks on civilian localities from [name indistinct] and Palali. The relentless assault since the night of the day before yesterday till yesterday morning, have damaged the charity inns in the precincts of Selvasannidhi temple and a number of houses in Geruda and Urikkadu Vallai [names as transliterated].

It may be recalled that the civilians who returned to see their homes and fields as well as to take some essential things last Sunday became the target of shooting by Sri Lankan troops. A number of them were also arrested. The International Committee of the Red Cross has received appeals from relatives to find out about those arrested by the troops in Vakaraiwatte.

Meanwhile, Kilinochchi secretariat sources say that they are facing difficulties in looking after civilians who have been displaced by the Sri Lankan Government's military action and who are currently staying in refugee camps. They add that their appeals to the government have been tacitly rejected. Although the Kilinochchi secretariat officials have written several letters to the Ministry of Rehabilitation and explained their position in person and taken several steps on this, the Sri Lankan Rehabilitation Ministry is turning a blind eye to the plight of Tamil refugees.

S. Santhanam, secretary of Colombo-based Tamil Action Committee, has told a Colombo newspaper that his Colombo residence was unwarrantedly searched by the government security forces at 0200 and that the troops refused to explain the search or show their identity cards. He has pointed out that the formation of vigilante groups by the new government comprising Sinhalese people, has paved the way for spying on Tamil families exclusively. Saying that the Sri Lankan police recorded the search in Sinhalese only, which is incomprehensible to him, Santhanam said anyone who believes that the linguistic rights of Tamils are honored in Sri Lanka should ponder over it.

Pro-India groups in Colombo have been issuing appeals to the Government of India to intervene and help resolve the problem in Sri Lanka. Particularly, the Eelam People's Revolutionarly Liberation Front, EPRLF, which was the outstanding stooge of India during the Indian

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occupation, has earnestly made this appeal to the Indian Government.

Meanwhile, the EPRLF has also suggested that the Sri Lankan Government openly seek aid from India. The above stooge group has also suggested that the Sri Lankan Government needed Indian assistance essentially to win the war. It is to be noted that [first name indistinct] Premachandran of this group recently visited India and held talks with Indian authorities and the antagonists of Tamil Eelam freedom movement such as Subramaniasamy [Janata Party leader] and Cho [a noted journalist in Tamil Nadu].

The thirst of the Tigers is for the motherland of Tamil Eelam. Thanks.

LTTE Report on Troop Actions

BK1101123796 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 10 Jan 96

[Compilation of LTTE telephone messages]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A number of people, who went to Pudur locality on last Sunday [7 January], were injured in the shooting by troops and were admitted to hospitals. Many other people are still missing. Of the injured, a 47-year old woman, Vinayakamoorthy Rajalakshmi, sustained head and leg injuries and was left in a helpless condition. She was rescued and admitted to Chavakachcheri hospital.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] ambushed a group of Sri Lankan policemen, who were on patrol duty at a place called Panankadu in Amparai District the day before yesterday. Although the military [as received] suffered heavy loss, the Sri Lankan Joint Operations Command headquarters announced that only one policeman was injured on their side.

Sri Lankan troops launched missile attacks from Palali at Pudur and Avarankal areas at about 1900 [1330 GMT] last night. There are no reports of damage. The military is carrying out such attacks to prevent the entry of civilians to that area. [passage omitted]

Teachers from Point Pedro zone have issued a leaflet stating that the Government of Sri Lanka is even compelling teachers to take up arms. In their leaflets, the teachers also stated: Only when we all congregate on the battlefront will we all be able to meet on our own soil.

The Kilinochchi District planning officer has stated that the Government of Sri Lanka has not disbursed the 44 million rupees earmarked for the district and has been causing inordinate delays in dispatching it. The thirst of the LTTE is for the motherland of Tamil Eelam. Thanks.

LTTE Report on Attack

BK1501104696 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 12 Jan 96

[Compilation of LTTE telephone messages]

[FBIS Translated Text] The day before yesterday, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] launched a surprise attack on the Sri Lankan troops at Ponnalai [placename as transliterated] locality. One soldier was killed and another injured in the attack, which took place at about 1330 [0800 GMT]. While the troops were busy strengthening their fortifications, the LTTE ambushed the troops, and totally destroyed their bulldozer.

Meanwhile, in the Trincomalee harbor area, where the Sri Lankan troops have maintained maximum security, the LTTE launched a grenade attack. This attack was launched at 2100 hours last Saturday at the old police station area, which is part of the Trincomalee harbor police station premises. The Sri Lankan side has not furnished details about the damage. Sri Lankan military officials have stated that although the troops tried to apprehend the attackers, they managed to escape.

People, returning from various localities in Pudur, stated that the houses and huts of the civilians were burned and their belongings robbed by Sri Lankan troops. These people, who also stated that the eastern part of Pudur looks like a crematorium, added that the doors, beams, and roofs of the houses have been dismantled by the troops. Several peasants have complained that the troops also plundered onions worth thousands of rupees, which were kept in bundles inside their houses.

The Jaffna Government Agent has appealed to the government to grant permission for private medical facilities in Jaffna to bring necessary medicines to the north. It is to be noted that most of the medicines needed for Jaffna are being supplied through private medical dealers only.

As the problems of displaced persons are mounting day by day, the Sri Lankan Government does not take any interest in the matter. The Sri Lankan Government is ignoring appeals made by Government Agents and Secretariat officials in this regard.

In the meantime, the Chandrika Kumaratunga government is making efforts to seek foreign assistance under the pretext of overcoming the problems of displaced Tamil people. The Government of Sri Lanka has launched a propaganda drive abroad that it is taking keen interest in fulfilling the needs of the displaced people. With the help of financial assistance obtained through these campaigns, the Chandrika Kumaratunga

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government is planning to launch another genocidal war in the country.

It has been learned that the Chandrika Kumaratugna government has taken steps to block the Tamils at Vavuniya, — since they are displaced by the military action, and are proceeding to Colombo to stay with their relatives — and to forcibly resettle them at Weligama. Many people, who went to Vavuniya on the way to Colombo, have been detained at the Veppan Kulam passengers' waiting hall. A plan is under way to forcibly settle about (?2,000) people in the first phase.

People have reported that the atrocities of the troops and the members of the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam [PLOTE] are on the increase at the Tandikkulam transit camp. The travelers, who said that the people are being attacked and abused, have also stated that the identity cards are being checked at eight points throughout the transit camp. These people have also complained that the high-handed behavior of the PLOTE group has worsened.

The thirst of the Tigers is for the motherland of Tamil Eelam. Thanks.

Nine LTTE Members Injured by Bomb

BK1301115396 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 13 Jan 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] NINE Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] at a jungle hideout in Kinniya were injured, three of them critically, when a bomb that was being primed accidentally went off, our Trincomalee district correspondent said.

The correspondent's sources had told him that the injured were removed to a hospital at Vakarai run by the LTTE.

Meanwhile, the LTTE's 'pistol gang' stalking the rival Tamil groups and 'traitors' had shot and wounded a Tamil civilian named Arunasalam Maheswaran, 45, at Anbuwalipuram in the Trincomalee town area, the correspondent reported.

The victim has been admitted to the Intensive Care Unit of Trincomalee Base hospital.

Our correspondent quoting sources from the North also reported that about 100 hand-picked LTTE cadres were now being trained in a Black Tiger military training camp at Chemmalai in Mullaitivu to be deployed in a series of attacks on vital targets in the East.

LTTE Report on Offensives

BK1601081196 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 13 Jan 96

[Compilation of LTTE telephone messages dated 13 January]

[FBIS Translated Text] Three soldiers were killed and another injured in an ambush by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] in Batticaloa District yesterday. The LTTE has seized some weapons. Only the contingent patrolling from the Weligama Vihara military camp toward (?Kanniyai) junction came under attack. It should be noted that the LTTE did not suffer any casualties in this daring attack, which was carried out within 500 meters of the camp after they intercepted the aforementioned military contingent leaving the camp on patrol at about 0615. Reports say that, following a request by the troops who fled and hid inside the camp after the LTTE onslaught, aircraft that rushed to the scene resorted to shooting in the jungles nearby.

One soldier lost his leg and another sustained grievous injuries when the soldiers from the Valachchenai-Kumburumunai military camp were caught in a land mine. Following the incident that occurred yesterday morning, the enraged soldiers resorted to the indiscriminate shooting of civilians. In this brutal act, a (?62)-year-old civilian named Chidambarappillai sustained serious injuries.

Missile attacks were carried out from the Vettilaikerni military camp the day before yesterday. It seems that civilians were not harmed during these attacks targeting civilian localities. Most of the missiles landed and exploded in Chundikkulam and its adjoining areas only.

With the help and assistance of several service organizations, the Tamils Rehabilitation Association is looking after the needs of the people displaced by the Chandrika Kumaratunga government's military action as much as possible. Housing projects are being started to resettle those who have been displaced. As a first step, ceremonies to inaugurate two housing schemes are to take place in Kilinochchi the day after tomorrow. From then until 29 January, 17 housing projects are to be opened in Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Vavuniya, and Mannar Districts.

The government has announced that the government officials who were displaced from the Jaffna peninsula should come back to Jaffna and continue their service. Kilinochchi Government Agent Thillai Nataraja has said that it is not possible to give any responsible position at the Kilinochchi government secretariat to the displaced officials. He also said that the displaced officials are at

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a loss to understand where they should now continue their service.

Reports from Vavuniya say that trucks loaded with food at Vavuniya-Tandikkulam are forcibly seized by members of the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam [PLOTE] organization, and hence there is a delay in transporting materials. It has also been reported that this hampers the movement of all vehicles going north for a day if one truck is hijacked by PLOTE members. If a vehicle is not found in a particular area, the Army denies permission to carry goods to all the vehicles in that area.

The thirst of the Tigers is for the motherland of Tamil Eelam. Thanks.

Government Prepares for 'Showdown'

BK1401121396 Hong Kong AFP in English 1158 GMT 14 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] COLOMBO, Jan 14 (AFP) — Sri Lankan security forces poured more troops to the island's east ahead of a major showdown with Tamil Tigers guerrillas who have stepped up their attacks in the region, defence officials here said Sunday.

The separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) destroyed two more electricity transformers in the eastern town of Kalawanchikudy over the weekend, the military said in a statement.

Defence officials said more than 35 power transformers had been sabotaged by the LTTE in the region during the past month in an apparent bid to blunt the impending military offensive against their jungle bases.

Army commandos were moving to the coastal district of Batticaloa where the LTTE escalated attacks following the fall of their northern citadel of Jaffna last month, defence officials said.

In Jaffna itself, the LTTE on Saturday shot dead a soldier, the military said. Although the army had driven out most of the rebels from Jaffna, there were a few guerrillas still holed up in the area, officials said.

There were also reports of an LTTE attack against a small islet in the north where a pro-government Tamil group maintains a small militia force. Military officials said they were awaiting details of Friday's attack on the Delft islet.

There was no word from the LTTE about the attack but in a statement from its London office Saturday the Tigers said that the military was preparing for another round of fighting by acquiring more military hardware.

The LTTE said the navy was building another base in the island's north and importing aircraft and more hardware to escalate the ongoing conflict.

The navy was setting up a facility on the small islet of Mandativu to enforce a stranglehold on the rebels' former bastion of Jaffna in the north of the country, the LTTE charged.

"This is an attempt to form a steel ring around the coast of the Jaffna peninsula," the LTTE said in a statement issued from its London office and received here Saturday.

Officials said that with the fall of Jaffna, the LTTE had escalated its attacks in the eastern province where at least 50 people have been killed in fresh violence in the New Year.

The LTTE lost its hold on Jaffna after 50 days of bitter fighting against government security forces earlier last month. Some 500 government soldiers and an estimated 2,000 rebels were killed in the fighting.

The Tigers accused the military of acquiring supersonic planes, gunboats and armoured tanks.

"This clearly shows that the Sri Lankan Government does not believe in finding a political solution to the national conflict," the LTTE said.

The government says it wants to neutralise the guerrillas, who ended a 100-day truce in April last year to resume their protracted campaign, before pressing ahead with a power-sharing package to resolve the drawn-out conflict.

More than 50,000 people have died in the separatist struggle in the past 23 years while all political attempts to appease minority Tamils have ended in failure.

Deputy Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte told parliament last week that the army would soon move against the Tigers, this time in the eastern province from where the army had withdrawn troops for the Jaffna offensive.

Defence sources said the 10,000 recruits taken on two months ago will be absorbed into service by February giving the army more flexibility to hold territory taken from the Tigers while conducting new operations.

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